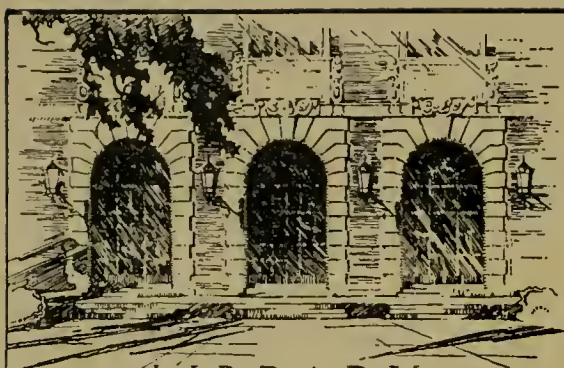


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JOSEPH JENKINS;

OR,

George Wilson Jones

LEAVES FROM THE LIFE

OF A

LITERARY MAN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS,” “THE
GREAT METROPOLIS,”

&c. &c.

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JOSEPH JENKINS.

CHAPTER I.

Joseph becomes a member of the Eccentric Society—Its constitution and objects—Persons of distinction who have been members—Number of members.

THERE is a Society in London under the name of “The Eccentrics,” of whose existence it is probable a very considerable number of our readers have never heard. The society, which succeeded a similar one called “The Brilliants,” can date its origin as far back as the year 1800. Several of Joseph’s most intimate acquaintances were members of this society, and being repeatedly entreated by them to become an “Eccentric,” he at last consented to being put in nomination as a candidate for admission. But before adverting to the circumstances connected

with his initiation, it may be proper that we should endeavour to give some idea of the constitution and objects of the society.

It was, as has been just remarked, established on the ruins of "The Brilliants," in the commencing year of the present century, and can consequently boast of the very respectable age of forty-two. It was set on foot by a band of the choicest spirits then in the metropolis, who were anxious to have some fixed place in which they could nightly meet for purposes of harmless hilarity, and where in the spirit of innocent banter they might speak of each other with unrestrained freedom of remark. They were also, on the spur of the moment, to get up ridiculous charges against each other; and the party preferring the charge was expected to make, with all due gravity, a lengthened speech, as able and ingenious as possible, in support of it. Witnesses were to be called to substantiate the various counts contained in the indictment, and the party accused was not only to have the

right of speaking at any length he pleased in self-defence, but was to have the privilege of cross-examining the witnesses of his accuser, and also calling witnesses of his own to disprove, where that was practicable, the accusations brought against him. The proceedings, in short, bore a striking resemblance to those in a court of law; the chairman being the judge, and the members present the jury. Trials of the nature to which we have alluded occupied, on many occasions, during the earlier and better period of the history of "The Eccentrics," many hours; and an amount of ability was often displayed in conducting the imaginary cases, which would have done no discredit to the most distinguished members of the English Bar. If this should appear an extravagant statement, the extravagance will vanish when it is mentioned that several of our leading judges now presiding in Westminster Hall, and a very large proportion of those at this moment at the head of the legal profession, and within a few

steps of the judicial bench, made their *debut* as public speakers in the large room in the Sutherland Arms, May's Buildings, in which "The Eccentrics" at that time, and till within the last few years, held their meetings. Now they meet in a house in King Street, Covent Garden. Among the present peers and judges who took a prominent part in the proceedings of the Eccentric Society, in the earlier stages of its history, we may mention the names of Lord Denman and Lord Campbell. Among the distinguished counsel in our courts of law, who in the commencement of their public life were Eccentrics, and were in the habit of speaking at their meetings, we may mention the names of Sir Frederick Pollock, the present Attorney General; Mr. Shiel, Mr. Serjeant Spankie, Mr. Serjeant Murphy, Mr. Adolphus, Mr. Charles Phillips, and Mr. Clarkson. Lord Mountford, and the Lords Coleraine, with various other members of the House of Lords, were not only "Eccentrics," but were among the most

regular in their attendance at the meetings of the society. Both the Sheridans were also "Eccentrics;" and few of the members, since the establishment of the society, have entered with so much spirit into its proceedings, as did Richard Brinsley Sheridan. It were an endless task to mention the names of celebrated authors who belonged to "The Eccentrics;" while as regards the reporters for the daily press, twenty or thirty years ago, it would be impossible to name half-a-dozen of any note who were not "Eccentrics." A considerable number of the Parliamentary reporters for the morning papers still belong to the society. Among the gentlemen of distinction connected with the drama and the stage, who were for many years (and in several instances still are) members of the Eccentric Society, it may suffice to mention the names of Munden, the inimitable comedian; Master Betty, the Roscius of his day; Mr. Power, who perished with the President steamer; the late Mr. Yates, and Sheridan

Knowles. Many of the present "Eccentrics" confidently assert, that at the formation of their society George the Fourth, then Prince of Wales, was one of their members. This, I am convinced, is a mistake. My opinion is, that if his Royal Highness ever attended any of their meetings, which is not unlikely, as his intimate friend, Major Hanger, was an "Eccentric" of the first water,—it must only have been in the capacity of an honorary member. Of this I am certain, that his name is not to be found in the books of the society, which it must have been had he been formally initiated and duly recognized.

The number of persons at present belonging to the Eccentric Society is about 200. The number that have belonged to it since its commencement is nearly 7000. Perhaps no other debating society—for such it may be considered—has produced an equal number of distinguished speakers. The speaking that used to be heard at their meetings, when "The Eccen-

trices," twenty-five or thirty years ago, were in the zenith of their glory, is represented by those who were members at that period, and still live to tell the tale, as having surpassed, in eloquence, brilliancy, and effect, anything they ever elsewhere heard. Among the eloquent "Eccentrics" of the period referred to, there was a Mr. Brownley, a reporter on the "Times" paper, whose happiest oratorical efforts are said to have been almost superhuman. There must certainly have been something very extraordinary in them, when Sheridan was frequently heard to say, "I have heard a great deal of excellent public speaking in my time, but I never heard anything at all approaching to that of Mr. Brownley."

CHAPTER II.

Ceremony of initiating a member into the Eccentric Society—
Joseph Jenkins' admission—Specimen of the trial of an
"Eccentric," when a charge is preferred against him.

THE ceremony of initiation into the Society of Eccentrics, is usually very short and simple. A member proposes a candidate for admission, eulogising his character, and dwelling on his worthiness of the distinction at which he aspires. The motion is seconded by another member, who usually not only concurs in all that has been said by the preceding speaker, but has something additional, in the way of panegyric, to bestow on the candidate. The members then proceed to the ballot; and in the event of his election, which is all but absolutely certain, the

candidate is called in, and informed by the chairman of his membership. He has an earnest of the character of the proceedings of the Society afforded him, in the congratulatory address which the chairman makes to him. He is usually eulogized, to use the expression of an Irish orator among the lower classes, "far beyond the fixed stars." He is assured, with the utmost conceivable gravity of countenance and seeming sincerity of tone, that there is not a man in Christendom whose admission would have afforded "The Eccentrics" greater gratification. The possession of every virtue under heaven is ascribed to him. If he be at all known in literary or professional pursuits of any kind, his fame is magnified ten thousand-fold. He is held up as the greatest of men in the department of literature, or in the profession, to which he belongs. If he be wholly unknown to public fame, he is endowed with talents of so lofty an order, that he cannot fail suddenly to burst forth, some day or other, in the social firm-

ment, as a star of the first magnitude,—attracting all eyes to him, fixing public attention on his extraordinary gifts, and challenging, nay, *commanding* the unbounded admiration of the whole civilized world. Whatever may be the nature of his present profession, or contemplated pursuits, pointed references are made to them. If he be a medical man, his knowledge of his profession is so profound, and his talents for investigation are so extraordinary, that many years shall not elapse before he will make discoveries that will throw those of Harvey and Jenner into the shade, and render him the greatest benefactor to his species which the world has ever produced. If the newly-admitted member be a military man, intending to devote his days and nights to the “art of arms,” he is discovered to possess, in his very countenance, as well as in his mind, all the elements of distinguished success on the battle-field. Had Napoleon been still alive, he would at once have discovered in the person of the newly-created

“Eccentric,” a man destined to reach the very summit of martial promotion; and whose deeds as a general will eclipse anything and everything which he (Napoleon) had ever achieved. The Duke of Wellington is alive, and were he aware of the indomitable courage, the fearless bravery, and the wondrous military skill of the newly-formed “Eccentric,” his Grace would tremble, and well he might, for the laurels he has won on the field of battle. If a literary man, there is something in his finely developed forehead, and singularly intellectual countenance, which bespeaks an eventual eminence in the walks of literature, equal to any ever attained by any previous writer. There are in his capacious, intelligent, and masculine mind, the materials of works—to be laid in due time before the world—which will not only spread his fame from pole to pole during his lifetime, but which will transmit his name to the remotest ages. His works will stand side by side with those of Shakspeare, Locke, and Milton,

while the world lasts. And were the world, as some philosophers have foolishly supposed, to last for ever, his productions would be co-eternal in their duration also.

Such is the strain of extravagant eulogy in which newly-elected "Eccentrics" are in the habit of being addressed by the chairman for the evening, while the other members present intimate their concurrence in everything which he utters, by repeated cries of "Hear, hear," tapping on the table, clapping their hands, and so forth. Of course, the success of the joke—for such it is—depends entirely on the ingenuity which the chairman displays in the matter of his speech, and the tone of seeming sincerity in which it is delivered. The great point is, so far to practice a deception on the newly-made member as to persuade him, that not only does the chairman himself believe everything he says, but that he is expressing the universal sentiments and feelings of the "Eccentrics" present. And so adroitly does the chairman often perform his

part, and so skilfully do the members perform theirs, that many, perhaps a majority of the newly-made members, retire from the ceremony of initiation, under a firm conviction that all that was said was uttered and responded to with perfect sincerity. Then the chairman concludes his speech, and declares the candidate a member. The latter returns thanks, pays his annual subscription of a sovereign, and has his name forthwith enrolled on the books as an "Eccentric."

When Joseph Jenkins was admitted a member of the Eccentric Society, the gentleman who filled the chair for the evening, possessed, in a singular degree, the power of persuading others, that what he said, when speaking in the purest badinage, was perfectly sincere. He said that Joseph was not only professionally a literary man, but prided himself—which cannot be predicated of all literary men—on his devotion to intellectual pursuits. He then launched out, in a remarkably skilful speech, into a high-wrought eulogium on the distin-

guished intellectual attainments of his “ friend, Mr. Joseph Jenkins;” a man who, as all present were aware, had already, though young in years, produced a poem, entitled “ The Universe,” which was equal to the “ Paradise Lost ” of Milton, and which, though too sublime and lofty in its conceptions to be appreciated or even comprehended by the mass of mankind, would, as certainly as to-morrow’s sun should run his wonted race, be, in the course of twenty or thirty years, as much read and admired and praised, as the grand epic poem which had just been named.—The prophetic sentiment of the chairman was greeted by energetic cries of “ Hear, hear,” and a loud and universal rapping on the table, by all present. A crimson colour came over the countenance of Joseph; his cheeks burned with the intensity of his blushes. He believed that the chairman, though over-estimating his literary pretensions, was perfectly sincere in every syllable he uttered, and that not less hearty and honest was the response made to

his eulogistic observations, by all the "Eccentrics" present. He stammered forth an expression of thanks for the "most flattering, much too flattering, way in which his humble name had been mentioned;" assured the chairman and the company, that his feelings quite overpowered him (which was strictly true); and declared that that was the happiest hour of his life.

Allusion has been made to the circumstance of formal trials of particular members taking place, other members having preferred some ridiculous charge against them. On the second occasion on which Joseph attended a meeting of "The Eccentrics," a Mr. Norman, who afterwards rose to considerable distinction, as a barrister in one of our distant colonies, preferred a charge against a Mr. Struthers, lately the editor of a London paper of influence and reputation—to the effect, that the latter was seen on a particular day, walking along the Strand, arm-in-arm with a person of equivocal character, and still more disreputable appearance. Mr.

Norman opened the case in a speech of great ingenuity and eloquence. The accused replied with equal eloquence and effect. He admitted that he was, on the day and at the place specified, in the company of the party named, but denied that the party's character was equivocal, or his personal appearance wanting in respectability. He said it with all respect, but he said it with confidence, that there was not a gentleman present of more irreproachable character, while, as regarded his friend's person, it need not shrink any day—he said it without meaning to give offence—from a comparison with that of the party making the groundless accusation.

“ Here,” said the chairman, after Mr. Struthers had resumed his seat, “ we have the conflicting assertions of two gentlemen equally respectable. The only course left to us, in our efforts to arrive at the truth, is to ” ——

“ To call witnesses,” interposed an “ Eccentric.”

“ Precisely so,” remarked the chairman.
“ Are you, Mr. Norman, in a condition to call witnesses in support of your charge ? ”

“ I am, sir.”

“ And ready ? ”

“ Quite prepared, sir.”

“ Well, then, call your first witness.”

Mr. Norman called Mr. Bradford.

“ Do you, Mr. Bradford,” inquired Mr. Norman, “ know Mr. Struthers, the party at the bar of this house ? ”

“ I do, sir, unfortunately.”

“ What do you mean,” interposed the chairman, “ by using the word ‘ unfortunately ? ’ You don’t mean to say, that Mr. Struthers is a man with whom any one need be ashamed to own acquaintance ? ”

“ I *said* nothing on the subject, sir.”

“ You don’t, then, wish it to be understood that you *mean* it ? ”

“ I would rather not express any opinion on the point.”

“ Why, you *know* that he is a highly respectable man.”

“ I do not *know that*, sir.

“ Do you mean to say that you know anything to the contrary?”

“ I do not mean to say anything one way or other.”

“ Mr. Struthers is a most respectable man,” pursued the chairman.”

“ That is matter of opinion.”

“ Proceed, Mr. Norman, if you please, with your examination of the witness,” said the chairman.

“ Well, then, you saw Mr. Struthers on the day, and at the place in question, in the company of a particular person?”

“ I did.”

“ You have declined to assert positively, that this person was a man of equivocal character.”

The witness nodded assent.

“ Have you any objection to express an

opinion as to the character of Mr. Struthers' friend?"

"None whatever."

"Then, perhaps, you will be kind enough to tell the chairman and the other gentlemen present, what you *think* of the party in question."

"I *think* that he is a person of no character at all; and I have formed that opinion after all the information I have been able to obtain respecting him."

"Really, sir," said Mr. Struthers, starting to his feet, and addressing himself, under great seeming excitement, to the chairman; "really, sir, this matter is assuming a rather serious aspect. I cannot sit still and see the character of my friend thus outrageously and unjustly assailed. Before the prosecutor proceeds farther in his examination of the witness, I must beg permission of you, sir, and the company, to put one or two cross questions to him."

"You will be allowed, Mr. Struthers, to put any question to the witness you please; only

you must wait until Mr. Norman has finished his examination."

"I am done," remarked Mr. Norman.

Mr. Struthers then proceeded—"You say that you have formed your very unfavourable opinion of the character of my friend, after all the information you have been able to obtain regarding it?"

"I do."

"And pray, sir, may I ask, have you obtained, in other words, do you possess any information at all, respecting the character of my friend?"

The witness hesitated.

"You must answer my question, sir," pursued Mr. Struthers. "Again, I ask, have you obtained any information at all respecting the character of my friend? If so, state the nature of the information, and the quarter whence obtained."

The witness was still silent.

"I appeal to you, Mr. Chairman, to compel the witness to answer my question."

“ You must answer Mr. Struthers’ question,” said the chairman.

The witness bowed.

“ I repeat my question once more—Have you obtained any information at all respecting the character of my friend ? ”

“ No, I have not,” drawled out the witness, amidst the laughter of the company.

“ Here, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen,” cried Mr. Struthers, with an air of offended dignity, “ here is a pretty person to give evidence against the character of any man ! I will ask him no farther questions.”

And Mr. Struthers resumed his seat.

“ Mr. Norman,” suggested the chairman, “ you brought a second charge against Mr. Struthers’ friend, namely, that of being a man whose personal appearance was wanting in respectability. You have not spoken to that charge, nor brought forward any evidence in support of it. Are we, then, to consider that you have abandoned it ? ”

“ Oh, no, by no means,” said Mr. Norman, suddenly starting to his feet. “ I am exceedingly obliged to you for reminding me of the circumstance: it was entirely an oversight. I repeat, and am prepared to prove, that the individual with whom Mr. Struthers was associating on the day in question, was grievously wanting in respectability of personal appearance.

Chairman.—State the grounds on which you rest the charge.

Mr. Norman.—Why, sir, he was slovenly and coarsely dressed.

Chairman.—That is too vague a way of expressing yourself. You must be more specific.

Mr. Norman.—Well then, his hat, which certainly did not cost more at first than four and ninepence (Laughter), was shorn of whatever quantity of pile it may have originally possessed, and contained, at least, half-a-dozen holes.

An “ Eccentric.”—Was the party’s hat the only defective article of his dress?

Mr. Norman.—It was not: all the other portions of it were in perfect keeping with his chapeau. (Laughter.) His coat was threadbare, and very clearly revealed his elbows; his waistcoat was divested of several of its buttons; while the anonymous portion of his apparel was in a state of deplorable dilapidation.

An “Eccentric.”—And his shirt, in what state was it?

Mr. Norman—Shirt! Why, he had none. (Roars of laughter.)

“Really, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen,” exclaimed Mr. Struthers, with great energy, as he suddenly sprang to his feet; “really, I must protest against this mode of procedure. How, I should like to know, has Mr. Norman come by the knowledge that my friend had no shirt?”

“Pray,” said the chairman, “pray, Mr. Struthers, calm yourself, and allow Mr. Norman to proceed. You will have an opportunity, when he is done, of rebutting his charges, and reply-

ing to him at any reasonable length you please."

Mr. Struthers.—I surely have a right to ask him, at this stage of the proceedings, how he came by the knowledge that my friend had no shirt on him, when he saw us together.

The Chairman.—You will have a right to put that or any other question to him afterwards, but not at the present time.

Mr. Norman.—Oh, I have no objection, with your permission, Mr. Chairman, to answer it now.

The Chairman.—Well, if you feel so disposed, you may.

"And how, then, sir, I repeat," resumed Mr. Struthers, with considerable seeming warmth, "how did you come to the knowledge that my friend had no shirt on his person on the day alluded to?"

"Because," replied Mr. Norman, "I did not see any indication of it." (Laughter.)

“Really, sir,” said Mr. Struthers, “this is a most extraordinary mode of——”

“Are you done?” interrupted the chairman, addressing Mr. Norman.

“My case is closed,” answered the latter, “unless Mr. Struthers, by denying the fact as to the shabby appearance of his friend, imposes on me the necessity of calling witnesses to substantiate the accusation I have preferred.”

“I partly admit and partly deny the truth of Mr. Norman’s charges,” rejoined Mr. Struthers. “I admit at once that there were, and still are, holes in the hat (Loud laughter) of my friend; but I deny that there are *six* holes, the number he stated, in his chapeau. I affirm that there are only *five* holes in it. (Roars of laughter). I further admit that his whole apparel was what is called ‘seedy;’ but I fearlessly deny the degrading assertion so mendaciously made (Loud cries of ‘Order, order,’ which were accompanied by a dignified rebuke from the chairman) respecting the alleged absence of a shirt from

the back of my friend. On what ground, Mr. Chairman, does Mr. Norman rest this grave accusation? Why, on the fact of his not perceiving any evidences of my friend wearing a shirt. And, I ask—and I ask with the indignation which becomes the occasion—is a man to be stigmatised as shirtless; is that indignity always to attach to his fair fame; is he, I repeat, or any other man, to be thus branded, merely because Mr. Norman, or Mr. Anybody-else, does not see, or choose to see, or, perhaps, by reason of an imperfect vision, *cannot* see, that very necessary article of apparel—I mean a shirt—on the person of my friend? Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I do respectfully but most confidently submit, that such a doctrine cannot be for a moment entertained in this respectable society. Were it to be received, no man among us would be safe. We should have Messrs. Normans starting up in scores to charge us with being shirtless. Is it for an instant to be admitted, that the non-per-

ception of an object is a proof that no such object exists? Only look to the consequences to which the admission of such a principle would lead you. Why, in that case, you are driven to the conclusion—you cannot help yourselves—that there is no such thing as wind; for who, I should like to know, will be bold enough to stand up and declare in this room that he has seen the wind? (Laughter and loud applause.) If any one were to make such an assertion, he would be held up to ridicule, and deservedly so, for the folly and falsehood—I beg pardon, gentlemen; I retract the latter word—for the folly and the unfounded nature of the observation. Some men display their shirts one way, some another: it is all a matter of taste.”

“Yes,” cried a voice in the corner of the room, “yes, but all who have them show them in some way or other. (Loud laughter.) The charge Mr. Norman brings against your friend is, that he had no shirt at all.”

“That remains to be proved,” remarked Mr. Struthers, tartly. “My argument is, that the absence of a shirt is by no means to be inferred from the circumstance of Mr. Norman not having seen it.”

“Well, did you see it yourself, Mr. Struthers?” cried a voice in the body of the room.

Mr. Struthers hesitated, and looked confused.

“Pray answer the question,” pursued the same voice.

“It is an improper question, and I will not answer it,” replied Mr. Struthers.

“The question is a perfectly proper one,” interposed the chairman, “and you are bound to answer it. The point in dispute is, whether or not a particular friend, with whom you were seen walking arm-in-arm on a certain day, wore a shirt at the time. The gentleman preferring the charge asserts that he did not. You, Mr. Struthers, deny the truth of the assertion. You maintain that the circumstance of his not seeing any appearance of a shirt, is not to be held

conclusive of the fact that he did not, at the time, wear on his person that very useful article. A member of this society, in the centre of the room, now retorts, and asks whether, from your own knowledge and your own observation, you can speak to the fact of your friend's having had a shirt on him on the day in question; whether, in other words, you *saw* a shirt on his person at the period referred to. The question is a very proper one, and you are bound to answer it."

"Well, then," said Mr. Struthers, quite crest-fallen, "I did *not* see a shirt on him that particular day." (Roars of laughter.)

The Chairman, in his capacity of judge, then summed up at considerable length. His charge to the "Eccentrics" present, all sitting in the character of jurymen, was in favour of the accused on the first count of the indictment, and against him on the second. The finding of the jury was to the same effect—namely, "Not Guilty" in reference to the equivocal character of Mr.

Struthers' friend, but "Guilty" on the count which charged him with associating with an individual whose personal appearance was wanting in respectability.

Such is a specimen of the way in which the "Eccentrics" conduct what they call their jury cases. It is proper, however, to mention, that no description on paper can furnish anything like an adequate idea of the spirit and interest infused into their proceedings. The assembled company; the chairman presiding as judge; the accused, placed in a prominent part of the room; the zeal manifested by the party charged and the party making the charge; the eloquence, the ability, the readiness, the wit, displayed by those who take part in the proceedings, conspire to clothe these proceedings with an interest of which it is impossible for those who have not been present at an "Eccentric" meeting, to form a conception. In fact, a stranger going into the room without being previously aware of the character of the

society, would fancy, from the seeming seriousness, zeal, and earnestness of those taking part in the proceedings, that all he witnessed was as much a matter of reality as are the proceedings at the Old Bailey.

And here it may be worthy of observation, that many of those who, within the last forty years, but especially during the first two decades of the present century, have risen to eminence at the English bar, or acquired a distinguished reputation as extemporaneous public speakers were not only, as before remarked, members of the "Eccentric Society," but, in a great measure, owe their professional success, or oratorical fame, to their experience in impromptu public speaking at its meetings.

CHAPTER III.

Deviations from the ordinary mode of initiating members into the Eccentric Society—Illustrations given.

OF late years a change has, on several occasions, come over the spirit of the “Eccentrics.” The proceedings on the introduction of a new member have, on the occasions to which we refer, been very different from what they previously invariably were, and from what they usually still are. Formerly, on the initiation of a member, there was nothing but a little innocent banter at his expense; of late, however, owing chiefly to an unhappy choice of a chairman for the evening, there have been several instances in which the introduction of a new member has been characterised by a species of banter degenerating into coarseness.

And as members, on their initiation, have a very imperfect conception of the practices of the society, the manner in which they are addressed and spoken of has often been likely to lead to unpleasant consequences. A few years ago, Mr. Herring, recently arrived from Lancashire, and wholly unacquainted with the mode of their procedure, wished to join the "Eccentrics." A friend undertook to introduce him, and to insure his election. They went together to the Sutherland Arms, May's Buildings. Scarcely had the candidate for membership taken his seat, which he had no right to do before he was elected, when the chairman for the evening, who personally knew him, said, in a tone of well-assumed and well-sustained seriousness, "I see a fellow of the name of Herring in the room. The presence of that person would be a disgrace to any company."

Here Mr. Herring looked unutterably confounded. An indescribable sensation came over him, suddenly depriving his eyes of their accus-

tomed powers of vision, and his tongue of its wonted power of speech. All sense of consciousness left him for a moment. In a short time he so far recovered himself as to be able to inquire, in faltering accents, why he was thus insulted.

“Insulted!” exclaimed the chairman, “That person insulted! The fellow has got no feelings; he never had any: it were impossible to insult him. He has no more sense of honour than the table before me. He is not only unfit to associate with the members of such a respectable society as this, but he is a discredit to the human species.”

“Hear, hear, hear!” shouted the “Eccentrics” simultaneously, as if approving of every word which their chairman had uttered.

“Really, gentlemen,—gentlemen, really this is,” stammered Mr. Herring, “this is—it is certainly—very unaccountable conduct. I don’t, gentlemen,—gentlemen, I don’t—at all understand this. It is to me most——”

“Gentlemen,” interrupted the chairman, “I cannot endure to hear a single syllable from the lips of so profligate a person as this. His voice is as odious to my ear as his appearance is to my eye and his character to my mind. There does not exist a more unredeemed villain. He is not even fit to associate with felons. I therefore propose that he should be at once ejected from the room in the most uncere-
monious manner.”

The confusion of Mr. Herring was increased. Could he credit the evidence of his eyes? Did he see a body of men patiently listen to the application of such opprobrious language to him, and not only listen to it, but not utter a word of disapprobation? nay, more, by their countenances, intimate their approval of it?

“Mr. Taunton,” shouted Mr. Herring, suddenly summoning, in the desperation of the moment, an almost supernatural amount of energy; “Mr. Taunton, you have uttered language for which I shall hold you responsible.

You shall not, sir, thus grossly insult me with impunity. You shall hear more of this."

Mr. Taunton suddenly rang the bell, and the waiter instantaneously responded to the summons.

"Do you know that person, John," pointing to Mr. Herring.

"No, sir."

"I'm very glad you don't. If you had known him, and yet suffered so disgraceful a character to cross the threshold of this house, this society would either have insisted on your dismissal, or have for ever deserted this house and chosen some other place for its sittings."

"Never saw him afore," remarked the waiter.

"And I hope you never will again; you will be at no loss if you don't. At all events, we never must see him again in this place. You hear that, John."

"Yes, sir."

"And you'll attend to our wishes."

"I will, sir."

“Very good.”

The waiter was about to depart.

“Stop, stop, John; don’t be in such a hurry. We have got some farther use for you.”

“Very well, sir.”

“You take that person there, and turn him out.”

“P’raps the gentleman—”

“The what,” said the chairman.

“P’raps the gentleman will—”

“Don’t misapply the king’s English, John, in so gross a manner. He has no more pretensions to the character of a gentleman than a chimney-sweep with his soot-bags slung over his shoulder.”

“Then, sir, p’raps the *individual* will leave the room of his own accord, and not require my interference.”

“Oh, most certainly; I’ll leave it,” said Mr. Herring, taking up his hat and quitting his seat; “but remember, Mr. Taunton, that I have not done with you yet.”

“Your threats, sir, I hold in as perfect contempt as yourself.”

Mr. Herring was in the act of quitting the room, when the friend who introduced him, and from whom (being unaccountably a silent spectator of all that was going on), he meant next morning to demand an explanation,—seized him by the arm, and told him that all that had passed was done in the spirit of pure eccentricity. It was the initiatory process. “It now only remains for me,” continued the other, “formally to propose that my friend Mr. Herring be admitted a member of the society.” The motion having been seconded, was carried unanimously amidst deafening acclamations. Mr. Taunton was the first to seize Mr. Herring by the hand, and welcome him into the brotherhood of the “Eccentrics.”

Many persons, especially young men recently settled in London, allow their names to be put in nomination as candidates for admission into “The Eccentrics,” at the earnest request of

friends. They consent to being proposed as members without, as just observed, having any definite ideas of the nature or proceedings of the society. They have some notions, from the very name of the society, that there must be something eccentric in its proceedings, but in what the eccentricity consists they have not the remotest idea. When such parties are first introduced, they are immeasurably amazed at the proceedings, whether they assume on the occasion a laudatory or abusive aspect. If commendatory, the party initiated is surprised or embarrassed in the highest degree, at finding himself so extravagantly eulogized that language seems to fail his brother "Eccentrics" in setting forth his wonderful merits. If, on the contrary, he is introduced on what is called the abusive principle—that is, by some charge being made against him as soon as he is elected—he is startled, if not confounded, at the boldness and recklessness with which he is denounced. In the latter class of introductions there have

been many instances of a most ludicrous kind; in some few there have been various escapes from unpleasant personal results,—the candidate assuming and clinging to the conviction that all the offensive observations that were made were the real sentiments of the speakers, and of the meeting also, inasmuch as they were applauded by all present. The most amusing scene which ever, perhaps, occurred from the candidate fancying that the abuse heaped upon him was seriously intended, took place many years ago, when Mr. Freeman, an Irishman newly arrived from Tipperary, was admitted. He bore in silence for some time the abuse and the invectives levelled against himself and his country, but evidently with feelings of strong indignation as well as astonishment. At last, unable any longer to control the emotions which agitated his bosom, he suddenly started up, and denounced the speaker as a liar and a scoundrel. “I appeal to you, Mr. Chairman,” he added with great vehemence, “for protection from

this ruffian conduct. Oh, sir, I could bear to be calumniated myself, but while the blood runs in my veins, I shall never sit in silence to hear my country insulted."

The speaker resumed his speech, by begging the gentlemen present to take no notice of the interruption which had been caused by the candidate for admission. "He is unworthy of notice, as you are all aware, gentlemen. He has no pretensions to the character, and certainly none of the manners, of a gentleman. He is" ——

"Really, Mr. Chairman," shouted Mr. Freeman, starting to his feet, and half bursting with rage, "I cannot stand this. You say, sir," addressing himself to the speaker, "that I am no gentleman. Do you adhere to your words?"

The gentleman speaking took no notice of the interrogatory.

"Then, sir," continued Mr. Freeman, "I hold you responsible. Here is my card; perhaps you will give me yours, sir?"

A general laugh followed.

“ And I see, Mr. Chairman, that this company also insults me by laughing at me.”

“ It was only a smile ; not a laugh,” remarked the chairman.

“ I maintain that it was a laugh, Mr. Chairman,” continued Mr. Freeman.

Here the company laughed again.

“ Didn’t you hear *that* laugh, Mr. Chairman ? The company have dared to laugh at me again ? ”

The chairman repeated his observation, that it was only a harmless smile, not a laugh.

“ Oh, sir, I am not to be desaved or humbugged in that way : it was a laugh, sir.”

A third laugh followed.

“ Is any gentleman,” said Mr. Freeman, casting his eye, which flashed with indignation, around the room, “ Is any gentleman so reckless of his life, as to put that laugh on paper ? ”

Renewed roars of laughter followed.

“ Where am I, Mr. Chairman ? ” exclaimed Mr. Freeman, after gazing around him in evident

amazement at the reception he was meeting with; "Where am I, Mr. Chairman? Sure, I must be among a band of thieves and ruffians."

Loud cries of "Order, order," mingled with renewed roars of laughter, followed.

"What gentleman," resumed Mr. Freeman, "dares to call me to order? Will he hand me his card?"

No response was made to Mr. Freeman's challenge.

"If nobody will give me satisfaction with pistols," pursued Mr. Freeman, "will any man fight me with his fists?"

Another burst of laughter proceeded from all parts of the room.

"Mr. Chairman," said Mr. Freeman; his countenance redolent of rage, and his attitude indicating that he was no novice in the doings of Donybrook; "Mr. Chairman, if you allow a stranger to be insulted in this way, I must hold *you* responsible."

And, as he spoke, Mr. Freeman threw off his coat, evidently resolved on having an immediate fight with *some* one. The friend, however, who introduced him, interfered just in time to prevent a pugilistic exhibition, by explaining to him, that the whole affair was a mere joke, and one of very frequent occurrence on the introduction of new members.

CHAPTER IV.

“The Eccentrics” address Mr. Romeo Coates—Mr. Coates returns thanks—Concluding remarks on the “Eccentrics.”

IT is a rule of “The Eccentrics,” that no person shall be admitted into their room, who is not a member. The only deviation from this rule, with which I am acquainted, was made about a quarter of a century ago. The circumstances connected with it were very amusing. Those who know anything of metropolitan matters at that period, will remember the interest which the “eccentricity” of Mr. Coates—commonly called Romeo Coates—then occasioned in the public mind. Among the other extraordinary whims which this singular individual—who, it ought to be mentioned, was a

gentleman of fortune—was seized, was that of distinguishing himself as an actor. He accordingly appeared on the boards of Covent Garden, to the infinite amusement of the town, in several of the leading characters of our most popular dramatists. Romeo, in Shakspeare's tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet," was his favourite character; and hence it was that he was nick-named "Romeo" Coates,—the name by which he is still known in Boulogne, where he has resided for many years, and where, it will be remembered, he contrived to obtain an interview with, and to elicit compliments from, Louis Philippe, when that monarch, a few years ago, visited that part of his dominions. The exhibitions of "Romeo" were so ludicrous, so outrageously absurd, so unlike anything that could ever have entered into the minds of the dramatists themselves, or into the conception of anybody but "Romeo" himself,—that persons flocked to Covent Garden every night of his performance for the purpose of laughing at him. In one of

his favourite parts, where the piece wound up with his murder, the audience, always in sheer ridicule—which, however, he mistook for the warmest admiration—*encored* the murder scene three or four times; so that poor Romeo had to endure the terrors and suffer the pains of three or four murders, without the interval of a few minutes between them to give him time to breathe. On one occasion, when personating the character of the “gay Lothario” in the “Fair Penitent,” he made a false step, and fell most awkwardly on his back, his heels mounting high in the air. The audience were convulsed with laughter, and some wicked wags *encored* that scene also. Then, again, whenever he had occasion to throw himself at the feet of the histrionic mistresses whom he adored, he deliberately laid a snow-white cambric handkerchief, which he always had in readiness for the purpose previous to kneeling,—on the stage.

The newspapers, one and all, feeling the

legitimate drama to be brought into disrepute by the acting, if acting it might be called, of this modern Romeo, assailed and ridiculed him day after day. Still he persevered until he had gone the round of his favourite characters. Just as he had completed these, the idea occurred to some of the "Eccentrics," and was at once adopted by all, of voting an address of congratulation to him on the manner in which, as an actor, he had acquitted himself; and requesting him to visit their place of meeting on a given evening, for the purpose of receiving it. This he agreed to do. The muster of "Eccentrics," as might be expected, was unusually great on the occasion. Romeo was punctual to the time appointed. The chairman, as a matter of course, undertook to present the address; and his speech was redolent of the badinage with which the address abounded. The latter hailed the advent to the boards of our national theatres of the greatest histrionic genius that had appeared since the days of Garrick. In

Mr. Coates the "Eccentrics" saw the man that was destined to restore the legitimate drama to its wonted glory. Already all the other tragic actors were trembling, as well they might, for their popularity. The daily and weekly press was bribed by them to ridicule and assail their (the Eccentrics') illustrious visitor on that occasion. It was even confidently asserted, that John Kemble, conscious he could not stand a moment's comparison with Mr. Coates, actually contemplated an immediate retirement from the stage; and, as Mr. Kemble had not appeared on the boards of Covent Garden for some time, it was actually believed by many that he had already, mortified at the unparalleled success of his rival, abjured the histrionic profession. Mr. Coates had the merit of furnishing the metropolitan public, by his original mode of acting, with a variety of new and felicitous readings of Shakspeare. He had discovered meanings in sundry passages of that great dramatist's works which none had ever seen in them before. Mr.

Coates could boast of histrionic triumphs never achieved by any other tragedian, however distinguished. There was not another instance on record in which the party murdered played the murder scene with such signal success, as to draw down universal and deafening *encores* from all parts of the house. The "Eccentrics" therefore felt, in common with all lovers and appreciators of the legitimate drama, the deepest obligations to Mr. Coates; and they could not, either in justice to him or to their own feelings, forbear taking that opportunity of expressing their sentiments in their collective capacity as "Eccentrics."

The speech of the chairman, and the address of the "Eccentrics," were loudly cheered throughout,—Mr. Romeo Coates standing beside the chairman, and drinking in every sentence with ineffable delight, because he deemed the whole to be perfectly sincere.

Mr. Romeo Coates rose to return thanks. "Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen," he proceeded

to say, "never, I assure you, in the whole course of my——"

"Mr. Chairman," cried a voice from the farther end of the room, "Mr. Chairman, I am sure I only express the feelings of every "Eccentric" present, when I say that it would be the greatest intellectual loss we ever sustained should we miss a single observation of our illustrious visitor, in the speech he is about to make. (Loud cries of 'Hear, hear!' in the midst of which Mr. Romeo Coates gracefully pressed his hand on his heart.) It would therefore be a particular favour if our distinguished friend would raise his voice as much as he can, as some of us are here eighty feet distant from the spot whence he is about to address the meeting."

Mr. Romeo Coates made a low bow, and proceeded, in ludicrously loud tones, to say—"This, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, is, I solemnly assure you, the happiest——"

"I am exceedingly sorry," interposed an

“Eccentric” in a corner of the room, “again to interrupt the honourable gentleman; but, for my own part, I am not only unwilling to lose a syllable of his eloquence, but it would be to me an infinite pleasure to *see* Mr. Coates while delivering his speech. And, gentlemen (here the speaker cast his eye significantly round the room) do not your bosoms heartily respond to the sentiment? Do not you share in the feeling?”

Deafening cries of “Yes, yes!” burst from all parts of the room.

“May I therefore,” resumed the “Eccentric” in the corner, “take the liberty of expressing what I know is the universal feeling, that Mr. Coates would get upon the table, so that we may all have the pleasure of *seeing* as well as hearing him?”

Romeo Coates mounted the table and made a low bow, amidst tremendous plaudits, his cambric handkerchief floating from his hand.

“I was about to say, gentlemen,” resumed

Mr. Coates, “when so agreeably—for I will call it agreeably—interrupted by my friend in the right-hand corner, that this is the happiest day of my life. I am literally overwhelmed, confounded, paralysed by this unexpected display of your kindness. Gentlemen, whatever may be my humble talents in the histrionic art, I am indebted for their development, and you, gentlemen, are indebted for whatever measure of gratification they have afforded you, to the discernment of woman—lovely woman. (Thunders of applause.) I chanced one evening to be reading a brief poetical piece, of my own composition, in the company of several ladies, when one of them remarked that my elocution was singularly chaste and effective. All present concurred in the opinion expressed by my lady friend. Cheered by their brilliant eyes, which spoke the admiration of their hearts, and by the music of the accents which proceeded from their lovely lips, I asked them whether they would like to hear me recite some of the

favourite passages of Shakspeare. ‘Oh, do!’ exclaimed one. ‘That will be *so* delicious!’ cried a second. ‘Oh, I should like it above all things,’ observed a third, her beautiful countenance lightening up with the radiance of the ecstasy which reigned in her gentle bosom. (Deafening cheers.) In fine, gentlemen, there was no resisting applications made from such quarters. I acceded to their wishes (Loud applause), and so gratified were they with my recitations, that, ever and anon, a flock of snow-white handkerchiefs, waved by hands equally snow-white, were seen streaming in the air, while they filled the place with the fragrance which they emitted. (Renewed plaudits.) It was suggested by one lady of surpassing personal charms, and distinguished intellectual attainments, that Nature had evidently meant me for the stage, and that, though rejoicing on my own account in my handsome independency, yet that, for the sake of the legitimate drama and its admirers—among which she classed

herself—she could have wished that I had not been a gentleman of independent means, as, in that case, I should, doubtless, have made the histrionic art my profession. ‘But what is to prevent,’ interposed another lady; ‘what is to prevent Mr. Coates coming out, occasionally, on the boards of either of our national establishments, in the capacity of an amateur actor?’ ‘Ay, to be sure,’ exclaimed one of my fair friends. ‘Oh, *do*, Mr. Coates; there’s a dear,’ (Loud cheers), remarked a second of my lady friends; and the sentiment was echoed by every one present. The upshot of the matter was, that, unable to resist the urgent and unanimous prayers which proceeded from so many lovely lips, I consented. Hence my appearance on the boards of Covent Garden Theatre. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen—or, rather, allow me to call you by the endearing name of friends. (Loud cries of ‘Hear, hear.’) Mr. Chairman and friends, I have thus frankly acquainted you with the

circumstances under which I was led to make that appearance on the stage of which you have been pleased to express yourselves in such unqualified terms of approbation, that I feel your applause—on my conscience, gentlemen, I do—to be an infinite recompense for the calumny and ridicule with which a base, a hireling, a degraded press has attempted to load me. In fine, my friends, I owe, indirectly, the proud position in which I stand in your esteem this evening, to the accidental circumstance of reciting, in the presence of a few ladies, the short piece of my own composition, to which I have referred. It only now remains for me to assure you” ——

“ Perhaps,” said an “ Eccentric,” in the centre of the room, interrupting Romeo, as he was on the eve of concluding; “ perhaps our distinguished visitor would so far favour the company, as to recite, before concluding, the piece which drew forth such warm applause from his lady friends, and the recitation of which has led

to such important results to the legitimate drama, and proved the prelude to so much enlightened enjoyment on the part of the public?"

"I will, gentlemen, with great pleasure," remarked Mr. Coates, "if I thought it would be agreeable to my friends around me."

A peal of applause followed which made the room tremble again.

The applause having eventually subsided, and silence being once more restored, Mr. Romeo Coates took out his cambric handkerchief, applied it to his face, thrust the fingers of his left hand through the hair which luxuriated on the summit of his forehead, and, after the utterance of a few preliminary "hems," proceeded with the most extravagant gesticulation to deliver himself of the following lines:—

"This comes from one, my dear, my love,
Whose fond affection fain would prove,
For you and you alone;
Not one of all the female race
Could wound my heart—disturb my peace,
Till you the deed had done."

Here the "Eccentrics" rose to their feet, and, by their voices, their hands, and their heels, greeted with the most enthusiastic applause ever perhaps offered to mortal,—the poetic effusion with which Mr. Coates had condescended to favour them.

"The lines, gentlemen, are, you will observe, on the inexhaustible topic of love, and are supposed to be addressed to the mistress of my soul. (Renewed cheering.) I have only, my friends, to repeat the assurance I made to you in the outset of my imperfect address, that this is the happiest day of my life. I will carry the grateful recollection of it to my grave. Wherever fortune may chance to cast my lot, thither the remembrance of this night of nights will accompany me; and, instead of fading, it will, my bosom tells me, (here Mr. Coates emphatically placed his hand on his breast), only grow more vivid as years roll over my head. Gentlemen, with sentiments of the profoundest gratitude for the distinguished and undying honour you

have conferred on me, I wish you all farewell."

Mr. Coates descended from the table and quitted the room, amidst thunders of applause.

It ought to have been before remarked, that the leading feature in the proceedings of the "Eccentrics," to which allusion has been repeatedly made, namely, that of bringing ridiculous charges against each other, has, in some cases, been attended with very unpleasant consequences. If a charge be brought forward which the party put on his trial knows, in his own conscience, to be just, it is with very great difficulty that he can divest his mind of the conviction, that the party bringing it knew there was some foundation for it; and, therefore, preferred it for the purpose of personally annoying him. An instance of this occurred a few years ago, which excited great attention at the time, and was likely, to have been followed by very serious, if not fatal consequences. A member, on the spur of the moment, started up

and charged another—an officer of rank in the army—with carrying his military notions into the privacies of domestic life. The party preferring the charge, proceeded to say, that the accused was very fond of testing the efficacy of his views on the subject of discipline, by striking his wife, and otherwise keeping her in a state of despotic controul; so much so, that the lady lived in constant terror of her life. Now it so happened, that every word of this was strictly true; and what aggravated the awkwardness of the matter was, that the fact of its being so was very generally known among the “Eccentrics.” The officer, instead of denying and disproving the charge in the spirit of innocent badinage in which it was brought forward, quitted the room, and immediately afterwards sent his accuser a challenge to meet him at Wimbledon Common on the following morning. An explanation took place, the result of which was, that the officer was satisfied that the other was not even aware he was married. Of

course, therefore, no duel took place, but the officer never afterwards entered the room: he abjured the "Eccentrics" for ever.

The father of the "Eccentrics" is Mr. Franklin, now in his ninety-fourth year. Mr. Franklin was, for a long period, editor of the "Morning Advertiser," but advanced age rendered it necessary that he should relinquish his connection with the press about fifteen years ago.

Joseph Jenkins entered with heart and soul into the spirit of the "Eccentrics," and spent many of his evenings at their place of meeting.

CHAPTER V.

Resolves on a visit to Ramsgate—Embarks on board a steamer—The aspect of the river—The passengers—Incidents in the course of the voyage—Arrival.

THE practice of going out of town for a few weeks in the summer season, formerly peculiar to the aristocratic classes and a few of the families of the wealthier citizens, has, of late years, become general among the middle classes ; and not among them only, but among all persons who can spare the time and muster the few pounds requisite for the comfortable performance of the journey to and from whatever place may be selected for the temporary visit. If at the West End, it would bring a species of disgrace on any of the fashionables who reside in that aristocratic locality, to be seen in town in

the month of September ; so a person belonging to the middle classes, who could not be able by the month of October to say, that he had been at Gravesend, Herne Bay, Margate, or Ramsgate, or some other watering village or town “ down the river,” in either of the previous three months, could scarcely hold up his head among his acquaintances for the next nine months to come.

All persons belonging to the literary department of the daily press, having their month’s holiday every year, Joseph, instead of spending his as he had done on the three previous occasions, with the exception mentioned in the previous volume, by taking lodgings at Hampstead or some other part of the suburbs, resolved on spending his month in the fifth year of his engagement as a parliamentary reporter, at Ramsgate, where he would at once be beyond the reach of metropolitan temptations, and enjoy the fresh invigorating breezes for which that watering-place is so justly celebrated. He ac-

cordingly started from London Bridge on a Saturday morning at nine o'clock, on his month's visit to Ramsgate. The weather being remarkably fine the vessel was well filled with passengers, all, like himself, intent on a Ramsgate holiday, of longer or shorter duration. Out of the 220 persons on board—for that Joseph, before the conclusion of the voyage ascertained to be the number—there was not a single clouded countenance to be seen. All were bent on pleasure; and all seemed resolved that it should not be their fault if they did not obtain the object of which they were in quest. Husbands confined to business during the week, were going to see and spend the Sunday with their wives, who had been breathing the Ramsgate air in a sort of widowed state. Fathers were panting to see their little pledges, as poets and novelists say, of connubial felicity; and some were no less anxious to see their offspring who never knew aught, except in fancy or from works of fiction, of what matri-

monial happiness, so far as regarded the mother, meant. There were husbands and wives on board, who, though they had never suffered a day to pass for the previous twelve months without their matrimonial squabbles, if not something worse,—appeared to be fully agreed on a truce for the occasion. In fine, whatever may have been the individual or domestic state of affairs in the homes they had severally left, there was not one present that did not seem resolved that that at least should be a day of enjoyment. The bell, which gives intimation of the moment of departure, at length rang, and the steam, which had been making a very disagreeable noise for some minutes, as if very impatient to do its legitimate work, now began slowly to turn the wheels of the vessel. The latter promptly acknowledged the connexion between the machinery and itself, by starting gracefully though slowly on its destined voyage. Gradually the revolutions of the wheels became more and more rapid, until the vessel had at-

tained her full speed. Beautiful was it to behold the spray which proceeded from the immediate neighbourhood of either paddle-box, and pleasing was it to witness the noble swell which the vessel left behind her as she threaded her way through the forests of ships and the crowd of skiffs and lighters and other nameless floating articles, which lay in motionless repose on Father Thames, or swiftly skimmed along his capacious bosom. On either side of "The Fame"—the name of the steamer destined to Ramsgate—were crowds of vessels from all countries and climes in the civilized world. The aspect of the shipping was imposing in the extreme. It resembled a wooden city erected on a liquid foundation; and yet the wooden edifices resting on this watery basis, were as secure as the brick and mortar ranges of buildings which lined either side of the river, and whose foundations were laid deep in the earth. As the Fame glided through the Pool, she met and passed numerous vessels bearing

the flags of all nations, with their pennons streaming in the air. Some of the vessels were in full sail, just starting for every quarter and for the farthest corners of the globe. Others were returning, after long, eventful, and perilous voyages, from the most distant regions of the habitable earth. Some of the former were in all probability commencing a voyage which they were not destined ever to terminate, or rather which they were doomed to terminate by being suddenly engulfed in the ocean ; while some of the latter vessels had been menaced with that disastrous fate. In other words, the sailors and passengers in some of the outward bound, though they suspected it not, had a watery grave in reserve for them ; and the sailors and passengers in some of those which were just reaching their haven, had narrowly escaped being consigned to a final resting-place at the bottom of "the deep, deep sea."

These and other reflections of a similar nature passed through the mind of Joseph Jenkins,

who, as will have been inferred from what was said of him in the outset of the work, was a person who could not witness such a scene as that which the river usually presents, without abandoning himself to a train of moral meditations.

By this time all on board the vessel, who had previously known each other, and had unexpectedly met on this occasion, had interchanged the usual inquiries and courtesies. Many there were who had not a single acquaintance on board. But, as will always in similar circumstances be found to be the case, most of the unknowing and unknown soon met with some person or other with whom to form an acquaintance for the occasion, without the formality of an introduction. In travelling, whether by land or water, in stage coaches or steam vessels, people display a wonderful facility for entering into conversation together. Everyone who has had occasion to travel, must have been struck with this. There are often, too, a

freedom and absence of reserve in the temporary intimacies thus suddenly formed, which are not always to be met with in those acquaintanceships which are the result of formal introductions in society.

By the time the steamer reached Gravesend, most of those on board had got into familiar conversation with some fellow-passenger or other. Those, of course, who had been previously acquainted, found no lack of materials for agreeable confabulation, nor any need of contracting new acquaintances. About fourteen or fifteen out of the 220 on board, were all that chose to "keep themselves to themselves," studiously avoiding all intercourse with their fellow-passengers, and preferring—miserable taste!—to continue in a state of practical solitude though in the midst of such agreeable society.

The cause of this may, doubtless, in some cases, have been an irresistible tendency to constitutional reserve; but it needed not the ghost

of Lavater to tell, that in the case of other passengers—at least, with regard to five or six of the number—the reason of their reserve was to be sought for in an intolerable conceit, which led them to fancy themselves superior to anybody else. They would have deemed it derogatory to their imaginary dignity to enter into conversation with, or, indeed, to take, in any way, the slightest notice of any one on board.

Among those whose demeanour must have made every one present assign them a place in this category, were two young ladies, rejoicing in the name of Baboon, and a Celtic personage, name unknown, but whose half Highland costume, coupled with the circumstance of his cranium being surmounted by the kind of bonnet worn by the Glengarry clan, procured him, from all on board, the sobriquet of Glengarry. The Misses Baboon, who were escorted by a young fop of a brother, were interesting specimens of the fine lady-species. So long as the vessel was in smooth water they walked the

deck, when they had occasion, or took occasion to move from one place to another, as if they had been treading on a sheet of hot iron. Their heels seemed quite superfluous articles ; it was, indeed, difficult to conceive for what purpose that portion of the human foot was given them. They extended their patronage exclusively to the remoter extremity of their feet as they trod, or rather tripped, along the deck. It seemed as if they had felt that it was quite a vulgar thing to put foot on the deck at all,—only it was a necessity they could not help. Though when walking they had often to thread their way through the crowd, and when sitting had scarcely room to move their precious persons, they so contrived to look and to demean themselves, as if not conscious that a human being other than themselves and their foppish brother, was on board. And yet their fantastically smart dresses, in conjunction with the extraordinary airs they gave themselves, attracted the eyes of the other passengers much more

to them than to any other person in the vessel.

Everything went on as smoothly as the most Cockney sailor could have wished, until the *Fame* had passed the Nore three or four miles. Then a breeze suddenly began to spring up, the water to become rough, and the vessel to pitch and plunge, as if she were quite undecided as to whether she ought to go down head-foremost to the bottom, or, by capsizing, fling all on board into the sea, leaving them to sink or swim, just as they might feel inclined. The women shrieked, and some of the less experienced of the men looked anything but pleased with their prospects of personal safety. Nor was a feeling of fear the only effect produced by the unmannerly motions of the *Fame*. It was edifying to see with what suddenness appetites vanished, which but a few minutes before were so voracious that one would have supposed that all the cattle in Smithfield market, including sheep and pigs to the bar-

gain, would scarcely have sufficed to furnish them with a sufficient meal. Sandwiches, which but a moment before were in great request, were now at a discount. Cold lamb, which a few seconds previously had been torn from the baskets of the women, unrolled with indecent haste, and which was in the act of being eaten, or munched rather, without the assistance of knife or fork,—all at once acquired such a hideous aspect as to cause the countenance to turn pale, and the very stomach to rise up in open insurrection at the sight of it. Even Guinness' stout, which but five minutes ago was in such brisk demand that the waiter began to have serious apprehensions lest his stock of that favourite liquid, unusually ample though it was, would be insufficient for the emergency,—even this popular description of porter suddenly lost all its palatable pretensions, and became as nauseous to the taste, and as odious to the eye, as that proverbially hateful medical mixture known by the name of black draught. Sand-

wiches, cold meat, bread and cheese, ale and porter, in all their varieties—everything, in short, solid or liquid, usually eaten or drank, were strewed on the seats of the vessel in all directions, not only untouched, but abhorred by the proprietors. Here and there, to be sure, was to be seen some happy person,—on the principle, I suppose, that there are exceptions to every rule,—never subject to sea-sickness, whose appetite seemed only to be whetted by every fresh roll or lurch which the vessel gave. “Shocking brutes,” exclaimed some of the women, at those intervals when they were able to make any exclamation at all—“Shocking brutes, to be eating when everybody else is so ill!” And there is no denying that it was in the worst of taste. But what will not some people do?

The roughness of the sea increased, and with that roughness came the usual consequences. Baskets were upset, and tumblers *tumbled* in all directions along the deck—their contents, in

most cases, politely following their example, though usually at a more lazy pace. Streams of brandy and beer, having their sources in different parts of the vessel, met and embraced each other in the most affectionate manner, and formed a new species of "half-and-half." Scores of the passengers, men and women in pretty equal proportions, were seen strewed in all directions, some in a horizontal, and others in a reclining position. Those who had hitherto successfully striven with the demon of sea-sickness, seemed as if they had been, one and all, suddenly seized with a fit of intoxication, brought on by previous undue libations of inebriating liquors. They reeled and staggered along the deck, and not unfrequently fell in very awkward postures, and under very awkward circumstances. At times it seemed, indeed, as if those untouched by the evil genius of sea-sickness, had been simultaneously seized with an unaccountable whim to dance some newly-discovered Highland reel, in which all

the rules of order and regularity should be set at systematic defiance. Old and young, male and female, the lively and demure, appeared to be equally the creatures of this extraordinary motion, when the vessel thought proper to be particularly funny in the way of plunging and rocking. It would have been well had the *Fame*, contented herself with carrying her freaks thus far. But no: imitating, we suppose, in her humble way, the conduct of the Marquis of Waterford, and various others who delight in ludicrous mischief, the *Fame*, on one particular occasion, raised her bowsprit as high in the air as if she had fully resolved to leap out of her watery element altogether and to start on an upward voyage in the direction of the moon. In a moment, again, as if suddenly changing her mind, and forming a resolution to commit the double crime of suicide and the murder of all on board, she commenced a terrific rocking from side to side, converting into so many mere playthings those of her passengers who

were still able to retain their perpendicular position, and rudely tossing about those who were strewed in all directions on forms, or were lying half buried amongst the sails and luggage that lay on deck. Persons cordially, or at least firmly, clasped each other in their arms, who but a moment before would have shrank from and sickened at the idea of contact. An old maid of at least three score and ten, very prudish and very primly dressed, was thrown, without a word of introduction or being even allowed a moment for a preliminary nod, into the arms of a mustachoeed dandy of twenty, who was engaged at the time in the gentlemanly occupation of energetically puffing a cigar; and, to aggravate the disaster, both fell, closely locked in each others' embraces, prostrate on the deck,—the head-gear of the venerable lady being, by the fall, thrown into a state of grievous disorder. Within a few yards of the spot which was the scene of this untoward occurrence, another, scarcely less serious to one

of the parties, took place. One of the ugliest-looking fellows in Christendom, six feet in height, with a circumference, or, as an alderman would say, a corporation, which would have vied with that of the celebrated Daniel Lambert, was flung, as if he had been as light as a feather, into the lap of one of the Misses Baboon. *Both* young ladies first shrieked and afterwards fainted. The indignant brother started to his feet, and looked the intruder fiercely in the face, as he sought to regain his perpendicular position; but, on surveying his colossal proportions more carefully, the fit of valour with which the youthful fop had, in the first instance, been evidently seized, suddenly evaporated, and he resumed his seat in sullen silence.—“Mercy on us, we shall all be drowned!” groaned a venerable matron, the wife of a green-grocer “in a small way of business,” as she was sent staggering from one part of the deck to another. “Shall we, ma?” eagerly inquired a little boy, standing hard by

in his mother's hand. "Ma" was too much terrified to return any answer to the question which the child, in the innocence of its little heart, put to her, evidently without having any idea of what drowning meant.

The sea continued to increase in roughness, and the vessel, as a matter of course, to rock and lurch with proportionate frequency. The effects of this, in the production of that most nauseous of all sensations, sea-sickness, soon became apparent to all—to the great majority in their painful experience, and to the remainder through means of their eyes and ears.

Sea-sickness is a horrible sensation. It is, perhaps, the most unpleasant that humanity is subject to. No one that has ever experienced it, would, at the moment of its greatest ascendancy, have the slightest objection to be tossed overboard. It is also a most powerful sensation: it prostrates a giant as easily as it conquers a child. Hercules himself would have been no more in its hands, than would a person in the

last stage of the most enfeebling disease to which humanity is incident. It renders its victims utterly helpless; it reduces them to a state of entire prostration. Scarcely more unable is the new-born infant to assist itself, than is the person who is thoroughly sick at sea. Sea-sickness is a rank republican; it levels all the distinctions which exist in society; it reduces all classes to a perfect equality during the period of its ascendancy. Just glance your eye along the line of heads hanging over the side of the vessel, and the probability is, that you see the head of the nobleman and that of his lacquey in close juxta-position. Down in the cabin there are Lady Something and her maid; but as the first is not in a condition to exact any homage, nor the second to offer it, you will find it a very puzzling point to say which is the lady and which the maid. Sea-sickness does away with etiquette. Persons who on other occasions, are pinks of politeness, are reduced by half-a-dozen of those peculiar qualms,

by which sea-sickness is always ushered in, to the practice of a primitive simplicity of manners. Even the greatest prude to be met with, is compelled to dispense with her starchness and stilts, and exhibits as little affectation as the unsophisticated village girl.

But this is a digression,—though most persons, it is believed, will feel disposed to pardon the author for indulging in it. On the *Fame*, there was a band of musicians, who, being accustomed to the sea, were strangers to the sensation which was prostrating its victims all around. They continued their strains until there was scarcely a score of persons in a condition to hear them. Not wishing thus to waste their melody, or to allow the happy few to enjoy a monopoly of it, they suddenly and simultaneously struck in the midst of an air which would have charmed the ear of Apollo himself.

Two young fellows, about sixteen or seventeen years of age, who had, doubtless, studied the art of reciting with great care, and who, in

the more tragic pieces, had clearly taken Mr. Macready for their model, had “favoured the company” with several specimens when in smooth water, which gave so much satisfaction as not only to draw down loud plaudits, but, what they no doubt considered much better, to draw out of the pockets of the audience a considerable number of pence. Encouraged by their past success, the recitative youths determined on treating such of the company as were in a condition to listen, to a few more “specimens of the works of the most popular poets,” notwithstanding the roughness of the sea and the heaving of the vessel. Hamlet’s celebrated soliloquy was the piece chosen to recommence with; and he whose turn it was to spout, began with great spirit, and with more than the usual amount and variety of theatrical attitudes:—

“ To be, or not to be—that is the question,
Whether ’tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The stings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a *sea* of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them” ——

“The sea of troubles,” instead of being ended by the unfortunate spouter, summarily ended him; for, while in the act of ‘mouthing the next word, he was seized with a qualm which afforded him a premonition of what was coming, just in time to enable him to reach the side of the vessel, whence, instead of his recent audience, he began addressing the sea. His brother reciter, pained to think that the audience, which was select though small, should be deprived of the remainder of Hamlet’s meditations, nobly resolved on finishing the piece which the other had begun. He, accordingly, after an explanatory and apologetic word or two, commenced with all the solemnity and emphasis becoming the piece.

- - - - - “To die,—to sleep,—
No more;—and, by a sleep, to say we end
The heart-ach, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to,—’tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish’d. To die,—to sleep;—
To sleep! perchance to dream;—ay, there’s the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,

Must give us pause : there's the respect,
That makes calamity of so long life :
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life;
But that the dread of something after death,—
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns—puzzles the will ;
And makes us rather bear the ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all ;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of ——'

Here the reciter's face suddenly became
“sicklied o'er with the pale cast of” sea-sickness,
and, without uttering another word, he hurried
away, without any apology to his audience, to
join his colleague in the new species of spouting
in which he had been for a few minutes engaged.
The recitation of Hamlet's soliloquy was not
resumed the remainder of the voyage; and, for
aught I know, remains in the same unfinished

state till the present hour, and most probably will do so till the crack of doom.

But among all the instances of sea-sickness which occurred, none excited such general regret as that of a venerable-looking man, who, while the other passengers during the smooth-water part of the voyage, were engaged in lively conversation, or in feasting their vision with the beautiful scenery on the banks of the river,—occupied himself in the praise-worthy work of circulating religious tracts. He persisted, with the self-denial of a martyr, in his useful employment, even after his pale face and the heavy expression of his eye, told but too plainly of the “queerish” condition in which his stomach was. Eventually, however, he, like most of his fellow-passengers, also found himself engaged in an unequal contest. Sea-sickness triumphed. When in the act of picking out from a large assortment, what he deemed a suitable tract for a person whose demeanour from the time the *Fame* quitted London Bridge till that moment, indi-

cated the absence of every moral feeling,—the worthy man was seized with symptoms which compelled him suddenly to withdraw his attentions from one who so much needed the pious counsels of the tract intended for him, and to transfer them to the side of the vessel. He, however, soon recovered, and resumed his commendable labours, just as if they had experienced no intermission.

Of all the scenes of sea-sickness, which up to this moment had been exhibited on board, the one most calculated to excite the risible faculties of those who had escaped the terrible infliction, occurred in the case of a little broad-built, as well as broad-brimmed Quaker, whose countenance was the very incarnation of meekness. He was a zealous tee-totaller, and during the voyage had, without one moment's intermission, performed the part of an apostle in the cause of total abstinence. There was not a vice in the universe,—for the scope of his observations was not confined to our planet,—

which he did not, and possibly with great justice, ascribe to an undue familiarity with the bottle. He attacked all the bottles alike: “black” bottles and crystal came equally under his unsparing lash. Equally free, fearless, and impartial, were the remarks he directed against liquids of all kinds,—always, of course, excepting the liquid which springs out of the bowels of the earth. Wine, whiskey, brandy, rum, gin, ale, porter, stout, bottled and unbottled, came all in turn under his sweeping condemnation. They were denounced, and, undoubtedly, with much justice,—as the enemies of religion, of morals, of social enjoyment, of domestic happiness; of, in fine, the human race. And in exactly the same proportion in which “our friend of the broad-brim”—for so he was generally called in the vessel—was eloquent in his denunciations of all spirituous liquors, was he lavish, and indeed poetic, in his praises of the transcendent virtues of water. He ran over, with wonderful fluency and faci-

lity, the many moral, social, and intellectual triumphs which had been achieved by an abandonment of the contents of black, blue, crystal, and all other bottles, in favour of the liquid which was extracted in its native state from the flowing fountain or the running stream. Water, indeed, was the panacea for all the evils under the sun. It was the universal remedy for the complicated diseases to which the human body is incident—a remedy so long sought for and so much talked of by philosophers, but never before discovered. It made man cheerful and happy, as all those could testify who, like himself, drank nothing else. And here the apostle of total abstinence gave a significant self-complacent look at his own comfortable little body. “It will cure,” he resumed, “every evil.”

“Will it cure sea-sickness?” interrupted Joseph Jenkins, who was one of the fortunate few who still continued to keep the terrible visitation at bay. “Because if it will,” con-

tinued Joseph in the spirit of ridicule, "it will be very useful now."

"I cannot," replied the Quaker, "venture positively to say, never having seen its merits tested exactly in that way. But this I know, that it is an excellent preventative against sea-sickness, or any other sickness."

"Is it an infallible preventative?" said Joseph.

"I cannot go quite so far as to say that, friend; but I believe there is none better."

"Do you speak from experience?"

"I do, friend. Dost thou not see me quite free from sea-sickness, while so many around us are suffering severely from that unpleasant sensation."

There was no denying the premises, whatever opinion might happen to be entertained as to the justness of the conclusion. Undoubtedly the little "Friend" stood before them without a symptom of the malady which had committed such terrible havoc among his fellow-passengers.

“And you ascribe your exemption from the prevailing evil, to your abstinence from spirituous liquors?” observed Joseph.

“I do, friend; and not without reason. If there had been less porter and spirits drank on board, there would not have been so many sufferers as we see around us.”

“I have drank a quantity of stout,” continued Joseph; “and yet I feel no tendency to sea-sickness.”

“Thy time is coming, friend, I doubt not,” observed Obadiah. “Wilt thou allow me to offer thee,” he continued, “a small tract?”

“Certainly,” said Joseph, putting out his hand and receiving the tract on temperance. “I am much obliged to you for it.”

“It is well worthy thy pe——”

Here the Quaker abruptly broke off, his countenance being suddenly overcast with a sickly paleness. As if struggling to conquer some queer internal rising, evidently struggling for the mastery, he again, after the lapse of a

few seconds, made a noble effort to finish his sentence.

“I was going to say, friend, that the tract is well worthy of thy most careful perus——”

The sentence remains unfinished till this day, though the reader will be at no loss to supply the omission; only the two letters “al” being necessary for the purpose. The Quaker unceremoniously forsook his few auditors, and hurried to the nearest part of the vessel which enabled him to communicate with the sea.

After the apostle of total abstinence had slightly recovered from the violent attack with which he had been so suddenly and so unfortunately seized—unfortunately, inasmuch as it in one instant demolished a favourite hypothesis,—Joseph advanced to him, and suggested a little brandy as likely to have a beneficial effect in quelling the turbulence reigning in his stomach.

The Quaker, not yet able to speak, shook his head, beckoned the suggestion away with his hand, and made other significant signs that he

was horrified at the proposal to open his mouth for the reception of a "deadly enemy."

"You had better let me fetch you a very little drop of brandy," pursued Joseph.

"No, no, friend," stammered the Quaker, now so far recovered as to be able to articulate.

"William, bring me a glass of Cognac;" said Joseph, addressing himself to the waiter, who chanced to be passing at the time.

"Yes, sir."

"And bring it this moment."

"Yes, sir."

And assuredly it was brought with an expedition that would have been sufficient to establish for life William's character for despatch.

"I am sorry to see you so ill," remarked Joseph, advancing with the glass of brandy in his hand to the quondam apostle of teetotalism, who had now resumed an upright posture. "Just do take a little brandy, it will do you good."

"Poison, poison," replied the Quaker, motioning the brandy away from his sight.

He had scarcely uttered the words, when instantaneously assailed by another internal insurrection, he turned about, and sprang with such force to the side of the vessel that he narrowly escaped falling overboard.

“Do, I intreat you, be advised to take a little brandy,” resumed Joseph, as the excellent, though perhaps over-zealous little man was slightly recovering a second time from the seasickness.

“Dost thou mean, friend, medicinally,” said the Quaker in plaintive tones, and with a woefully blanched and lugubrious countenance.

“In any way you please.”

“One may take a little medicinally,” pursued the Quaker, looking eagerly at the contents of the glass which Joseph held so invitingly in his hand.

“Very good; then take it medicinally if you prefer it; only take it some way or other,” said Joseph.

The Quaker put out his tremulous hand to

receive the glass,—the tremour being, doubtless, caused by the conjoint operation of the seasickness and the unpleasant reflection that he had thus been compelled to falsify to a certain extent the total abstinence principles which he had so zealously been inculcating all the day. He inverted the glass with all the grace and dexterity of an experienced tippler, though there could be no doubt that he was at home an unexceptionable teetotaller.

“Do you not feel much better for the brandy?” inquired Joseph, a few seconds after the contents of the glass had found their way down the Quaker’s throat.

“Thank thee, I think I am, friend.”

“I thought so; I was sure the brandy would have that effect,” remarked Joseph.

The Quaker entirely recovered in a few minutes, carefully tied up his temperance tracts, retired into the cabin, and did not again make his appearance on deck till the vessel reached Ramsgate.

So very sudden, in the case of many people, is the recovery from sea-sickness, that it is almost as instantaneous as the attack. By this time a considerable number of those who had been laid prostrate by its powerful hand, had got entirely rid of the sensation. "Richard," John, and James; Mary, Matilda, Letitia, &c., were severally "themselves again;" while a great many more were clearly in a state of convalescence. Onward went the *Fame*, laughing at and leaving far behind scores of lazy craft, small and great, which she overtook on the way. In the meanwhile, among the few who had hitherto kept the demon of sea-sickness at a proper distance, were our old acquaintances Glengarry, and Mr. and the Misses Baboon. They had looked throughout with evident contempt, unmingled with a morsel of pity, on the unfortunate persons they saw suffering around them. Glengarry continued to pace the deck with all the fancied dignity and self-consequence which had marked his demeanour from the first; while the Misses

Baboon alternately sat and moved about, turning up the anonymous organ of their faces, and seeming quite shocked when their eye encountered any person who had been seized with the prevailing malady.

“I think, love, we had better sit down here a little,” said Miss Lucy Baboon to her sister, Miss Jemima, pointing to an unoccupied form which stood before them in the centre of the vessel.

“I think so, too, dear,” said Lucy; “for we have been walking some time.”

“Frederick, we are going to sit down;” said Jemima, addressing herself to the five-feet-nine of affectation and dandyism, which both ladies concurred in dignifying with the name of brother.

“Va-ey well” (very well), said the fop, gently pressing between his fore finger and thumb a stunted mustachio which vegetated on his upper lip.

“Had not you better sit down, Frederick,”

suggested Miss Lucy, making room for him between her sister and herself.

“I do’ant mand thoa I do,” replied the other, condescending to be seated as he spoke, and tapping the edge of his boot with a light smart cane which he sported on the occasion.

“We’ll soon be at Ramsgate, won’t we?” inquired Miss Jemima.

“Woy, yes we shall, by and by,” replied Mr. Frederick, muttering the words in a way of which no idea can be given on paper.

“How long will it be?” inquired Miss Lucy.

“Woy, I should think not more than an hour and a half.”

“La! will it be that time yet?” observed Miss Jemima, somewhat pettishly.

“I believe it will, love, be about that time,” replied the young swell.

“Suppose we sit down here,” said a young woman, with an infant in her arms, addressing herself to her husband, and seating herself by the side of Miss Jemima Baboon.

“Very good,” replied the husband, also young in years. And he sat down, as a husband ought to do, beside his wife, to whom it was afterwards ascertained he had only been married twelve months.

“Is it not wonderful, as well as fortunate,” he remarked, after a minute’s silence, “that we have not been a bit sick all the way?”

“It is, indeed, very surprising and very lucky,” answered the other.

About two minutes passed without a word being exchanged between the married couple. What could be the meaning of this? Could they have been seized with some sudden, unaccountable fit of dislike to each other? There was not time to form an opinion on the point, when the husband cleared up the mystery of the matter,—so far as his silence was concerned. With the rapidity of lightning he leaped from the side of his wife, and ranged himself among those whose heads were hanging over the vessel. He had scarcely reached his

new destination—one which he had been fondly flattering himself he should entirely avoid—when his wife, springing to her feet, and throwing her child into the arms of Mr. Frederick Baboon, was instantly side by side with her husband, taking part with him in the unpleasant occupation in which he was engaged,—thus affording a remarkable illustration of the popular hypothesis touching the strong sympathies which exist between husband and wife.

Mr. Frederick Baboon shrunk back aghast on the reception of the unexpected gift. Had the infant dropped from the clouds, he could not have been a whit more amazed. Miss Jemima shrieked aloud, and Miss Lucy swooned, as they saw the little charge so suddenly confided to their brother.

After a few seconds of unutterable confusion, which afforded the rest of the passengers, now nearly all recovered, infinite amusement, Mr. Frederick Baboon looked imploringly first towards one sister and then another, as if

silently seeking their assistance in so painful an emergency. Miss Jemima was still gasping with affright, while Miss Lucy had not yet thought proper to recover from her swoon.

“What am I to do with this ba-aby?” Mr. Frederick at last piteously inquired, at any one who might please to answer the question,—glancing an irresistibly lugubrious look at the innocent charge, which he held most ungracefully in his arms.

No one responded to his appeal. Again, after the lapse of a few seconds, he looked around for help. He looked in vain; no help came. On the contrary, all who were in a condition to enjoy the amusing scene laughed heartily, some immoderately, at the ridiculous appearance which the dandy made.

“What *was* to be done?” Ay, what was to be done, would have been the answer of echo, if there were any echo at sea. There Mr. Frederick sat, still holding the innocent cause of his distress in the most clumsy manner, and

looking fifty times worse than a condemned criminal at the Old Bailey. Never was human being placed in a more ludicrous plight ; never did man cut a more ridiculous figure. At last he turned to sister the first—"Jemima, dear."

Miss Jemima had not yet recovered her breath, and made no response.

Next he turned to sister the second—"Lucy, love."

Lucy was equally deaf to his appeal. She was still partially, or pretended to be so, under the influence of her swoon.

Again the question recurred—"What was to be done?" Mr. Baboon had, at one time, thoughts of laying the innocent babe down on the deck, and leaving it to its fate ; but then it occurred to him, that that might prove a rather perilous mode of getting rid of his unoffending charge ; for the probability was, that the whole company would unite in their execrations of so barbarous an act. Of course the objections to throwing it overboard were still more ortho-

dox; for there was a very strong probability that, if he were to get rid of his "incumbrance" in that way, he himself, provided he escaped the less summary punishment of being torn to pieces on the instant, would be forthwith sent after it. And even supposing the passengers could have so far restrained themselves as to visit him with neither punishment, there were visions of coroner's inquests and Old Bailey proceedings, which would not have been without their effect in preventing his adoption of so unfeeling a course. At this critical moment, and when as perplexed as ever, the little innocent's mamma had so far recovered as to be able to take charge of it herself. She advanced to Mr. Baboon, took the infant from his arms, and thanked him for his attentions to it. Attentions! Simple woman! She knew no better. She had been so ill herself that she knew nothing of the attentions or *in*-attentions which her lovely babe had received. Mr. Baboon breathed more freely when relieved

of his charge ; and, somehow or other—it is curious how such coincidences *will* happen—both sisters contemporaneously recovered their wonted self-composure, when little Master or Miss Anonymous (for nobody, to this hour, knows the sex or name of the infant) was transferred from their brother's arms to the more attentive arms of its mother.

“Dears,” said Mr. Baboon, addressing his sisters, “let us walk about a little.”

Both sisters intimated their concurrence in the proposal. Miss Jemima took Mr. Frederick's right arm, and Miss Lucy his left. “Woat a lovely day we have——”

Mr. Frederick's remark was suddenly interrupted by a miniature Niagara of spray, which rudely dashed against him and the two ladies. Mr. Frederick made use of an exclamation which it were better not to repeat ; while Misses Jemima and Lucy uttered, if there be not an Irishism in the expression, a harmonious scream. Who shall describe the world

of mischief which that unmannerly wave produced ! Of Mr. Frederick's disasters we say nothing ; those of his sisters it is not for us to describe, because none but a lady can enter properly into the extent of the calamity which befalls one of her sex, when, all of a sudden, she is doomed to witness the wholesale destruction of lace, blonde, ribbons, and so forth, in which, but a moment before, she rejoiced with ineffable joy. All three hurried down to the cabin, there to bewail the disaster which had befallen them,—Mr. Frederick to vent his mortification in broken Cockneyisms, and the Misses (his sisters) to shed over their calamities oceans of briny tears. Of course their airs and affectations were at an end for the day. They remained invisible the rest of the voyage.

By this time the vessel was opposite Broad Stairs, which, as those who have performed the voyage are aware, is within two or three miles of Ramsgate. Glengarry still continued to bid defiance to sea-sickness, and still more loftily, if

that were possible, did he bear himself on that account. All of a sudden, however, he was observed to seat himself on one of the forms in the middle of the deck; and scarcely had he put himself into a sitting posture, than he fixed his eye on the edge of the vessel directly opposite where he sat. With his eye thus steadily fixed on a particular spot, and he looking as if it had been "fixed on vacancy," Glengarry remained for some seconds. It was clear that this change in his demeanour and appearance was not without its meaning. The only question was, what *was* the meaning? The question was not destined to remain long unanswered. A sudden leap from where he sat, to the spot on which his eye had been so intently fixed, furnished a satisfactory solution of the problem. The leap would have done credit to Spring-heeled Jack himself,—a personage of whom we hear a great deal, but of whose history, beyond the fact of his being a gentleman of great physical agility, nobody seems to know anything.

So great was Glengarry's haste to reach the particular spot, that overboard went his bonnet. A shriek from several of the passengers plainly indicated that they had, for the moment, confounded himself with his bonnet. They were, however, instantaneously undeceived. Sounds most unpleasant to ears polite, or, indeed, to any ears, proceeded from Glengarry's throat, and made themselves heard in every part of the vessel. And yet, though seeing the Celt in such deep distress, a number of those present were sufficiently unfeeling to enjoy, and to laugh immoderately at, his calamities. They regarded the awkward position in which he was now placed, as a righteous retribution for the haughty demeanour he had exhibited during the voyage, and the contemptuous manner in which he had looked upon themselves when, one after another, and sometimes half-a-dozen at a time, they were seized with the same malady as that which now numbered him among its victims. To render the circumstance more mortifying

still, Glengarry, bonnetless as he was, was compelled to continue his bending position over the side of the vessel, and to utter the sounds peculiar to one in his situation, until the *Fame* actually landed,—which she did in the presence of a vast concourse of spectators. Whether the sounds referred to were English or Gaelic, is a point which none of those on the pier or in the vessel were able to decide; nor are we ourselves ashamed to confess, that it is also too knotty for us to settle.

CHAPTER VI.

Our hero returns to town—Becomes an extensive magazine contributor—Remarks on magazine writing.

JOSEPH, after a month's sojourn in Ramsgate, returned to town, much refreshed by the invigorating sea breezes which he inhaled at that favourite watering-place.

Having by this time obtained access to the pages of several of the periodicals which pay for accepted contributions, he was, after his month's residence at the sea-side, seized with a fit of literary industry ; and “ worked off that fit,” as he himself expressed it, by “ getting up ” articles for the various magazines referred to.

To write attractive magazine articles, is much more difficult than is generally supposed. And

it is a curious fact, that many of the most distinguished authors of the day, have completely failed in their efforts to write a popular paper for any of our periodicals. Just let any one glance his eye over our current magazine literature, and then let him say whether, but for the circumstance of their names being attached to their contributions, he could have believed it possible that authors whose fame fills the civilized world, could ever have suffered the miserable stuff which is there the acknowledged produce of their pens, to have had a moment's habitation in their minds. Yet so it is. To account for the fact, is another matter. My own opinion is, that the difficulty may be partly accounted for, from the circumstance of an author of established and extensive reputation, being accustomed to occupy whatever space he may require. Consequently, he finds it impossible sufficiently to concentrate his ideas and contract his incidents,—without impairing their effect,—so as to bring the article within the

limited compass usually allowed to an individual contribution. In magazine writing, there is no room for introductory flourishes, none for digressions, none for the clap-trap accessions of high-flown descriptions, which occupy so much space in the pages of our three-volume works of fiction. The magazine contributor must plunge into his subject at once. The first sentence must tell; and every succeeding sentence must have its point and piquancy, otherwise he will never acquire the reputation of a successful contributor to the periodical literature of the day. The fire of smart and telling things with which he commences, must be kept up without a moment's cessation. To flag is fatal. Episodes, underplots, and all the other appurtenances of the orthodox three-volume novel, are wholly unknown to the magazine writer. They are forbidden materials for him to work with.

Magazine writing was a much more profitable, and a much less precarious occupation, at the period to which we are now referring, than it

has been for some time past. The proprietors of the leading periodicals rarely paid a contributor, possessing more than the average tact and talent, less than twelve guineas per sheet. The average rate of remuneration for contributors of the first class, was sixteen guineas per sheet; while those who possessed an aristocratic title, in addition to their talents, and who consented to let their names be attached to their contributions, were paid as high as twenty guineas per sheet. Nor was the high rate of remuneration given for contributions to popular periodicals, sixteen or seventeen years ago, the only inducement which literary men had to turn their attention to that kind of writing; there was then a great probability, provided the writer possessed versatility and talent, of getting one's name put on the list of stated contributors. It is now far otherwise in both respects. Three and four guineas a sheet are only now given for articles to one or two of our magazines which rank high. Five guineas in the instances to

which I allude, are the maximum amount of remuneration. One or two other periodicals give ten guineas, where they gave twenty. As regards the stated, or even frequent insertion of one's articles, that is now out of the question, unless where private influences are brought to bear. The secret of all this is explained by the fact, that sixteen or seventeen years ago there were but few competitors in the magazine field; now it is overrun with persons ambitious of distinguishing themselves in that department of literature.

The class of articles which Joseph Jenkins chiefly contributed to the periodical literature of his day, were of the kind which have a foundation in fact, but which are mainly dependent for their success, on the effect with which the writer mixes up the emanations of his own fancy with the realities of actual incidents. He required a ground-work for everything, but possessed no ordinary facility of raising a large superstructure,—one, too, which was usually

pleasant to the eye,—on a very slender foundation.

As one of the articles which Joseph thus contributed to the periodical literature of fifteen or sixteen years ago, not only had its origin in circumstances which came under his own observation, but affords some curious information respecting the spirit of rivalry which exists in greater or less vigour in all trades in the metropolis, the author will, possibly, be pardoned, if he so far interrupt the flow of the narrative, as to give the article a place in the pages of this work. And, perhaps, it cannot be more appropriately introduced, than as forming the next chapter. Its title was “The Hatters of High Holborn.”

CHAPTER VII.

An episodical chapter — The rival hatters — Expedients to which they resorted in carrying on their opposition to each other.

JOHN NOKES was for many years known as a hatter, in a small way, in High Holborn. It was his good fortune, for a long time, to have no rival near him. The consequence was, as he used to say, that he was enabled to keep up the dignity of “the profession” by keeping up the price of his hats. John was a little man. His altitude, even with the high-soled shoes, which he always wore, only measured five feet four inches and seven eighths. Like all little men, he was very dignified in his manner. Nothing could exceed the bustling pomposity of his deportment when engaged in turning over

his stock of hats to get a capital fit for a customer. Whenever the purchaser got a hat which suited him, Mr. Nokes took it off his head, and giving it a smart whack on the crown with a cane which he always snatched up from the counter when a customer made his appearance, replaced it on the cranium of the latter, observing with a peculiar self-complacency of manner, "That, sir, is a hat which the king on the throne might be proud to wear."

But little John was not destined always to have matters his own way. "An intruder," as he called him, of the modern school, had the cool assurance to begin business directly opposite his shop. For some time Mr. Nokes assumed an air of philosophic indifference, and affected to laugh at the idea of his new opponent's success. The latter, however, whose name was William Jones, had recourse, immediately on opening shop, to the practice of advertising—a practice which never entered into the imagination of Mr. Nokes—and the result was,

that before he had been a fortnight in business, John had the mortification of seeing sundry excellent customers of his own, go into Jones's shop with "shocking bad hats," and come out with new ones "shining so brilliantly," to use Mr. Jones's own words, "as to surpass everything hitherto attempted in the trade."

This was bad enough, in all conscience, for poor Mr. Nokes; and many were the curses he muttered, both at his rival and at "modern improvements in hat-making." But the worst of the matter was yet to come. Hitherto Jones had contented himself with advertising in general terms. He simply announced, by means of handbills, that his hats would be found to be of a superior quality, and the prices moderate. Even little John himself was compelled to own that this was all quite fair and reasonable in a beginner, however much he might suffer from the opposition. By the time, however, that Mr. Jones had been a month in business, he hoisted a large signboard, and circulated some

thousands of handbills, announcing that his hats were the cheapest and best in the *neighbourhood*. This was a terrible stroke to the diminutive hero opposite. Hitherto he had been passive, however mortified, at the doings of “the intruder.” But this was not to be borne. It would have been, to use his own expression, to let his business commit suicide, to suffer it to pass without taking some means to neutralise the effects it was calculated to produce. Mr. Nokes accordingly consulted some of his friends as to what ought to be done. After some deliberation on the subject, they suggested that the best course for him to adopt would be to put up a sign-board, and issue handbills, with the words in large letters—“The cheapest and best hats in the *world*.” The chagrined little man did as he was desired. Mr. Jones now saw that his rival was determined to carry on the war with vigour; and resolved not to shrink from hostilities, which he had himself commenced, he forthwith exhibited another board, with the inscription

on it—"Cheaper and Better Hats than those Over the Way." Of course it followed, according to every acknowledged rule of logic, provided the public could only be made to believe the assertion, that Mr. Jones's hats being cheaper and better than those of his rival, must be the cheapest and best in the world. Mr. Nokes's signboard and handbills necessarily went for nothing. What, then, was to be done? John, or Johnny, as he was usually called in the neighbourhood, was again under the necessity of taking the advice of his friends. After discussing various schemes for successfully competing with his formidable rival, it was at last agreed, that as Jones had painted his house red on opening shop, by way of distinguishing it from others—and especially from that "over the way"—Nokes should have his, which hitherto rejoiced in a yellow complexion, painted exactly the same colour and in the same way as that of "the intruder." This was accordingly done. Suspicions now began to cross the mind of

Jones that, in his Lilliputian opponent “on the opposite side,” he had caught a tartar. Still, as he had provoked the conflict, he could not, with credit to himself, retire from it. He therefore got the whole front of his house, from top to bottom, painted over with the words—“The Original Red House.” Nokes, who boasted that though little in person he possessed a great mind, rose, like every genius, with the occasion; and next day were seen on the front of his premises gigantic black letters on the red ground—“The *True* Original Red House.” This, for a time, quite confounded Mr. Jones. On recovering partially from the confusion into which he had been thrown, a thought struck him, and, Archimedes like, he exclaimed aloud, to the amazement of his workmen—“I have it! I have it!” And so saying, he ordered his boy to bring the painter immediately. Before the boy had well crossed the threshold of the door, Jones wrote on a slip of paper—“The *Royal* Original Red House;” which words forthwith

appeared in conspicuous characters on the front of the house. "Let the little despicable creature see what he can do now," said Jones to himself, with an air of triumph, as the painter had finished the last letter. Imagine his surprise and mortification when he next day found that the front of Nokes's premises rejoiced in the imposing inscription—"The *Genuine* Royal Original Red House."

It was now clear that the war could no longer be carried on by means of the painters,—who, it is unnecessary to say, had all this time been reaping a rich harvest from the disputes of the rival hatters. Mr. Jones accordingly determined on at once abandoning that mode of warfare, though he scorned to retire from the war itself. Handbills appeared to him the weapons with which he could, in all probability, most effectually carry on the conflict with his small opponent "over the way." Mr. Jones, in a few days after abandoning the idea of any longer prosecuting the war through the medium of the

painter, accordingly put forth a handbill, in which, after proving completely to his own satisfaction, that Nokes had behaved in a manner very “unbecoming a gentleman,” he baptized the opposition shop as “The Yellow Red Sneak.” Little Nokes, not relishing so ugly a cognomen as the “Yellow Red Sneak,” attacked his rival in another handbill, under the alarming title of “An Exposure of Villany,” in which Jones was called a “reptile,” a “rascal,” and so forth. Jones retorted next morning, in “An Appeal to Englishmen,” in which he asked whether there could be a more dastardly character than that of a “yellow red sneaking coward.” Nokes took no notice of this query; but, in less than three hours, he published another handbill, in which he boldly asserted that Jones’s hats were mere trumpery,—a perfect disgrace to the trade, while his (that is to say, Mr. Nokes’, of course) stood unrivalled in the *world*. Jones retorted, that his hats were the best in the *universe*, and that Nokes manufac-

tured the worst: that, in fact, he was only a would-be hatter. The latter forthwith, in a long handbill, written quite in the George Robins style of eloquence, “submits to the world” whether his hats have not been found by “the world” to be unequalled in quality, and concludes by broadly charging his rival with having cheated the public ever since he opened shop. Mr. Jones resents the imputation with becoming spirit; and waxing poetical, as he had already waxed indignant, he exultingly exclaims—

“ Famed hatter of Holborn, who gained great renown,
By his much-approved dealings all over the town ! ”

This couplet is of course meant to apply to Mr. Jones himself; and he appends to it, in plain prose, the very sensible question, “ What greater proof can there be of the superior quality of my goods and of my mode of doing business, than is afforded by the fact that the despicable little animal across the street has been

obliged to pirate my colours, and thus suck the honey of my expectations ?”

“Pooh ! pooh !” answers Nokes, “I have a right to paint my house any colour I please.”

“Who doubts or denies it,” answers Jones, “but why pirate my colours; why not, like every true Englishman, stand to your own, were it not that you found the whole of London were coming to my shop to purchase hats, while yours was as deserted as if it had been on some unpeopled island ?”

Nokes declined answering this question ; contenting himself, in his handbill of the following morning, with heaping all manner of personal abuse on his opponent. The latter finding that he had the greatest share of customers, contrived to keep his temper ; and levying a contribution from the muses, for he had now regularly engaged a sort of poet laureate, to annoy his opponent “in metre,” as he called it,—he parried personal scurrility in self-laudatory verse. The following is a specimen :—

But the greatest of good oft with evil is mixed,
(In the public esteem being thoroughly fixed)
All the small fry of hatters were grievously sore,
That the buyers of hats all flocked to his door.
But among the whole set was no madder a fellow
Than one who had painted his bricks a bright yellow,
And who finding this colour their friends never led,
Contemptibly pilfer'd his neighbour's famed red.

Hostilities thus continued to rage (on red paper, it should be mentioned) for some months, to the profit of the printers and the amusement of the public. Mr. Nokes manfully stuck by his scurrilous mode of prosecuting the war, applying terms to his rival before unheard of in the vocabulary of abuse. The latter, determined to show that he possessed more varied resources in the management of hostilities, dispensed with the poet to make room for a fabulist, whom he had engaged for the purpose. The first production of the modern *Æsop* is much too long for us to give: but as the "moral" is brief we here subjoin it:—"MORAL.—When an ignorant and unskilful individual sets himself up for an accomplished tradesman, without one quali-

fication necessary to the character, how frequently does it happen that he is laughed at and despised by those whom he presumed to imitate, and punished by those whom he attempted to deceive."

Nokes replied to this in the usual way, namely, by personal abuse. Fable succeeded fable every day, and the same sort of answer was always returned, until the appearance of the thirteenth fable of the series,—in the "moral" of which the High Holborn Æsop chanced to characterise Nokes as "the ugliest little person in the universe."

This was the worst cut of all. Nokes' vanity was deeply wounded. His physiognomy was certainly of a most forbidding character. On the following day his handbill was very brief. It simply intimated that the author would reply to the "scandalous, gross, and most unwarrantable libel on his person, in another way."

From that moment the handbill warfare ceased. The poet had been before supplanted

by the fabulist; and the latter now found that his occupation, like that of Shakspeare's Moor, was gone. The printers looked on the circumstance of this sudden termination of the war, as a calamity of the first magnitude. They had been laying the flattering unction to their souls that entire casks of ink would be "shed," and reams innumerable of paper consumed, before hostilities should be brought to a close.

Those who had watched the progress of the war, now became all anxiety to learn what Nokes could mean by the intimation that he would reply "in another way," to the imputation which Mr. Jones had thrown out on the beauty of his face and the altitude of his person. It was stoutly contended by some, that he intended to commit some personal outrage on his rival; but others saw at once that this could not be the correct hypothesis, because, while Nokes was a mere pigmy in stature, Jones was an athletic and muscular man; and that consequently, in an attempt at an assault,

Nokes himself, should his opponent retaliate, as doubtless in such a case he would, would stand a great chance of being ground to powder in the true Jack-the-Giant-Killer style. A third class were positive that the little hatter meant to retire altogether from the contest, and that the threat in question was only an unmeaning sort of flourish, with which he sought to lessen the dishonour of defeat.

In the meantime Mr. Nokes confined his intentions to his own breast. That he had not retired from the conflict, but meant to carry it on, though in another mode of warfare, was made apparent in less than a fortnight, by the appearance, to the unutterable surprise and dismay of Mr. Jones, of a large van in the streets, with two high sides, painted red, and having on each side, in as large letters as the Leviathan size of the vehicle would admit, the words—“The Royal *Central* Red House, No. ——, where the best and cheapest hats in the world are sold. No connexion with any pretenders

in the neighbourhood." By this "ingenious device," little Nokes achieved for the time a complete triumph over his opponent. It was, however, only for a very short time. In the course of ten or twelve days, Mr. Jones caused a still larger van than that of his opponent to be made, also painted red, and containing the inscription in "flaring" letters—"The *True Royal* and Original Red House, No. —, which is still unrivalled for the cheapness and quality of its hats. Take notice—No connexion with any *small* would-be hatter in the neighbourhood." But in addition to this, and the larger size of the van, Jones mounted two men on his "vekel," as Nokes called it, one before and the other behind, each with a hat on his head, painted red, ornamented with the inscription,— "The unrivalled hats for seventeen shillings, at the True Royal Red House, No. —." The personage who stood behind also carried a sort of bugle-horn, from which he extracted such singular sounds as had the effect of attracting

the attention of every person whose eye the van met as it passed along the streets. It was now clear to every body, and to none more so than to poor little Nokes himself, that in this mode of warfare Jones had completely the advantage. How Nokes could once more put himself in a better position, was a question which puzzled him to answer. He therefore determined to consult some of his friends on the subject, the very evening of the day on which Mr. Jones's van was "brought out." A circumstance occurred, however, before night, to render the advice of his friends, unnecessary. "I say, Tom, my old chap," said the guard of Jones' vehicle to the driver, "I say, old chap, vould it not be a bit of jolly good fun for us, if ve vere to run agin that ere hopposition wan?"

"You may say that, Jem; I'm blow'd if I vould not shiver it, to atoms, horse and man and all, gin we did."

"And sarve it and 'em right too," said Jem.

“ Vy, its only a piece of trumpery stuff, fit only for the fire. I’d be ’shamed to be seen vith it, I’m bless’d if I vould’nt,” remarked Tom, giving the horse a sharp smack with the whip.

“ Sartainly, its not like our set out,” observed the other, taking off his painted hat, and looking complacently at the black letters on the red ground. “ This I knows, any how, as that the — ”

“ I’m blow’d, Jem, if it aint a-coming,” interrupted Tom, in a tone of supreme delight, his face looking like that of the laughing philosopher of old.

“ You don’t mean to say that, old boy,” said Jem, standing on tiptoe and stretching out his neck, in his endeavours to get a peep over the top of their own van, at the doomed vehicle.

“ Don’t you see it, Jem, crawling up the hill like a snail ?”

This observation was made opposite Furnival’s Inn, while Nokes’s van was coming up Holborn Hill.

“ I’ll be hanged if it be’nt,” shouted Jem, leaping for joy at the sight, as far as the little wooden step on which he stood would permit him to leap. “ Now, then, old cock, do the thing in fine style,” continued Jem.

“ O, von’t I; you let me alone for the matter of that,” replied the other, applying his whip to the shoulders of the horse.

As the animal started off at an accelerated speed, a sardonic smile at the contemplated mischief played on the countenance of Jem.

The moment the driver of Mr. Nokes’s van perceived the “ opposishun vekel ” advancing, he also applied the whip unsparingly to the horse’s back, not with the intention of a rencontre, but for the purpose, as he himself afterwards said, of mortifying Jones’s men, by showing them “ vat a fine hanimal of an oss he had.” Both vans were accordingly being driven at a furious rate, when he who was entrusted with the destinies of Jones’s vehicle, dashed right against that of Nokes. The wheels of both

vehicles, which came in collision, went spinning into the street. Down came the vehicles themselves, and both the lofty sides of Nokes's van went to pieces by the fall. One side also of that of Jones's was shivered into innumerable fragments. The other however, sustained but little damage. Jem, who but a minute before was exulting in the expected mischief, was pitched head foremost a respectable distance into the street; and in addition to his alighting in mud two or three inches deep—for it had rained all the previous part of the day—his frontispiece received several severe contusions, the marks of which remained for months after, as remembrancers of the collision. Tom also was ejected from his seat by the violence of the concussion; but beyond falling in the mud he suffered no sensible injury. The driver of Nokes's van singularly enough fell back in the vehicle; and on being “chucked out,” as he himself afterwards expressed it, received no injury at all.

Here, then, was an end of hostilities between

the rival hatters through the medium of vans. Nokes now determined that he should in future contest the point with Jones in a more "constitutional way," as he himself expressed it.

Little Nokes was in the habit of spending his evenings, after shutting shop, in the parlour of the Coach and Horses, in a neighbouring street. On the night after the affair of the van collision, several of those present affected great sympathy towards him, and indignation at the conduct of his opponent. "Jones is an unprincipled vagabond; he ought to be hooted on the streets," said a broken down penniless dandy, raising from the table and looking significantly into it, a glass which had just been emptied of gin and water.

The sentiment was music to the soul of the little hatter. "What will you have to drink, sir?" rejoined Nokes, his countenance beaming with joy at finding a friend in a comparative stranger; "will you take a glass of brandy and water?"

"O my dear sir, don't trouble yourself," said

the other; "the conduct of that fellow Jones is truly execrable; it is, indeed, Mr. Nokes."

"Perhaps, sir, you will have no objection to our having a bottle of port together. Waiter, bring me a bottle of your best port," said Nokes, with manifestly increased delight at this supplement to the opinion which the other had expressed respecting the character of his rival.

The wine was on the table in an instant. Nokes first filled his friend's glass and then his own. "My dear sir," said he, extending his little hand to the other, "my dear sir, I am heartily glad to see that the man's character is estimated at its proper value, even by strangers: I have the pleasure of drinking your very good health, sir." Nokes put the glass to his mouth, and emptied its contents at a draught.

"The conduct of that ere Jones is disgraceful to yoomanity; indeed it is, Mister Nox," said a greasy-looking little fellow, sitting in the corner next to the door, and puffing away at his pipe with most commendable industry.

“Perhaps, sir, you would come and join us. Waiter, bring another glass,” cried Nokes, delighted at seeing friends rising so rapidly and unexpectedly around him.

The little man changed his locality forthwith. In a few seconds he and Nokes were pledging each other’s health in overflowing bumpers.

“I tell you vat it is, Mr. Nokes,” said another person, who had just swigged the last drop of a pint of half-and-half; “I tell you vat it is, Mr. Nokes, I am von as doesn’t like to say nothing agin nobody; but I’m sure of this, anyhow, as how that feller Jones must be either a stealin’ of his ’ats ready made, or he must be a robbin’ o’ his creditors—he sells ’em so cheap.”

“Vy, yes,” said an undertaker, just begun business; “vy, yes, you may say that, frien’; an’ the end of it will be, that he’ll be sent to prison.”

“And sarve the feller right, too,” observed

the other. "All sich as he who hopposes 'onest tradesmen should be sent to prison and suffered to rot there."

"I hope as how he'll come my vay soon," said the undertaker; "O, vouldn't I be so 'appy to do the job for such fellers!"

"Gentlemen," said Nokes, starting to his feet in an ecstasy of delight; "Gentlemen, come, pray do come and join us. Waiter!" shouted the little man, at the top of his voice.

The waiter made his appearance before the sound emitted by Nokes' stentorian lungs had died away.

"Have you nothing better than port to give us?" inquired the little hatter.

"Champagne, sir—very excellent champagne, sir," answered the waiter, giving two or three waiter-like shuffles with his feet.

"Champagne, ay, champagne; that's the ticket; bring us a couple of bottles as quick as you can," said Nokes.

“Mr. Nokes!” said the undertaker, “Mr. Nokes, really you are——”

“My dear sir, pray don’t mention it,” waving his right hand; “nothing, I assure you, can give me greater pleasure than to express my gratitude to those who, like you all, gentlemen, see through the character of this man.”

His “friends” looked each other significantly in the face. The undertaker winked with his left eye at the greasy-looking little man who sat opposite to him.

All who were in the room had now become Mr. Nokes’ guests. The two bottles of champagne were quaffed in excellent style, followed by another bottle of port, amidst some of the choicest specimens of abuse of poor Jones ever before exhibited.

They parted that night. But all of them were in the parlour of the Coach and Horses in good time next evening, waiting the appearance of Mr. Nokes. The little man was there sooner than usual. Mr. Jones was again as

heartily abused as before; and Nokes treated his "friends" as liberally to wine as he had done the previous evening.

Several other persons, who chanced to enter the parlour in the course of the evening, perceiving how matters stood, qualified themselves for admission on the list of Mr. Nokes' friends, and amply partook of his liberality. The thing was kept up in this way for ten or twelve consecutive nights, the number of Mr. Nokes' "friends" increasing every evening, until some of his near relations having been informed of the circumstance, interposed to prevent his ruining himself, by keeping him at home after he had closed his shop for the day.

Ever since the appearance of the last handbill which Mr. Nokes put forth, promising to reply, in "another way," to the scandalous insinuation of his opponent, that he, to wit, Mr. Nokes, was the ugliest little person in the universe—ever since the publication of this handbill, Nokes had had two confidential persons in his

employ, frequenting the public-houses and perambulating the streets in quest of very ugly and very little men. Their instructions were, to obtain, if possible, the names and addresses of any such persons as they could find answering the description ; so that Mr. Nokes might have an opportunity of communicating with them, should he deem it proper. What Mr. Nokes' object was they did not know : all he told them was to execute his wishes, and let no one know they were so employed. They indulged in a thousand conjectures as to their employer's object, but they did not hit upon the real one.

Mr. Nokes' agents could have no difficulty in finding ugly, very ugly men ; they were to be met with in every direction. The place in Theobald's Road, where the notorious Robert Taylor, the self-styled "Devil's Chaplain," at that time spouted his blasphemy, swarmed with such persons. The agents chanced one night to drop in there, and took, almost at

hap-hazard, the addresses of two dozen and a half, which they thought would surely be enough to answer their employer's purpose. They returned to him, exulting at the great success of their mission. They handed Mr. Nokes the list.

"And these are all decidedly ugly men, are they?" said he.

"Werry," said one.

"O, decidedly frightful fellers," said the other.

"A good deal more so than me," observed Mr. Nokes, affecting a little pleasantry on the subject.

"Why, said the one, "I don't know, if I must speak the truth, that they are *all* as ugly as you, Mr. Nokes; but I'm sure *some* of them are. O, there are such hideous brutes among them!"

"What do *you* think?" said Mr. Nokes, addressing himself to the other agent, who as yet had expressed no opinion on the subject.

“Why, I think, Mr. Nokes, it’s very difficult to say. It all depends on people’s opinion; and opinions, you know, sometimes varies very much.”

“But you are sure you have some *very* ugly persons on your list?”

“Bless your soul, sir, I’ll swear that. Some of them are perfectly horrible to behold.”

“And all very little?” said Mr. Nokes.

“I don’t think they are particularly little,” observed one of the agents. “However, we never thought you wanted them *little* also.”

“How stupid, to be sure!” remarked Mr. Nokes, quite chagrined. “Did I not give you particular instructions to get them very ugly and very little?”

“Bless your soul, sir, we understood it quite different. We thought you wanted two sets; one set very ugly, and the other set very little. And so we went in quest of the ugly set first.”

“Oh, dear, dear! what an awkward affair!”

sighed Mr. Nokes, energetically rubbing his little hands. "You must get persons who are both very ugly and very little."

The agents looked at each other.

"That's a very different matter," says the one.

"It is, indeed," observed the other. "And rely on it, it will be a much more difficult task to execute."

"At any rate, we'll do our best, Mr. Nokes," said both, as they quitted his shop in High Holborn.

They, indeed, found it a very different matter. After perambulating the streets for several hours, without meeting with a single person that would answer their purpose, they were about to return home for the day, when they observed in Parliament Street a person whom they both agreed in thinking would suit their purpose to a hair. "Pray, sir," said one of them, "may I take the liberty of asking what is your name?"

“Why do you ask that question?” said he with an air of surprise and sternness.

“Only, sir, to decide a wager,” replied one of Mr. Nokes’ agents, at the same time respectfully touching his hat.

“Oh, if that’s it,” said he, with a grim smile, “my name is Lord ——.”

The two agents then proceeded slowly in the direction of Abingdon Street; but as they were passing the statue of Mr. Canning, one of them shouted, “Here’s another—just our man!” pointing to a person a few yards from them.

“Pray, sir,” said one of them, “may I use the freedom of inquiring your name?”

“What, I should like to know, have you to do with my name?” said the stranger, in a very sullen mood, and glancing so savage a look at them as almost to frighten them from his presence.

“Only, sir, because we had a dispute about it,” answered the party who had asked the question.

“Why, if that’s all,” said the stranger, in a much more subdued tone; “if that’s all, my name is R——, the member for ——.”

The two agents then returned home. They set out again on their mission on the following day, and returned in the evening with a list of four names. On the day after, notwithstanding all their industry and exertion, they could only succeed in finding two persons that would answer their purpose. They intimated to Mr Nokes on their return, their determination to relinquish the farther prosecution of the task they had undertaken, owing to its being a much more arduous one than they had in the first instance apprehended it would prove.

“Let me see,” said Mr. Nokes, looking up to the ceiling of the shop, as if lost in some abstruse calculation; “let me see, that is half-a-dozen altogether you have got?”

“Oh, eight, sir! eight, sir!” observed one of the agents, with great energy.

“Half-a-dozen, Mr. Nokes, exclusive of

Lord J—— and Mr. R——,” said the other.

“Oh, ay; but you know we cannot calculate on them,” observed Mr. Nokes. “Well, I think,” he added, after a short pause, “six may answer our purpose.”

The agents exchanged congratulatory glances with each other. “Happy to hear it,” said the one.

“We are, indeed, Mr. Nokes,” observed the other.

“Quite sure now, they are decidedly ugly and decidedly little.”

“We’ll swear it,” said the one.

“Oh, prime ’uns, sir,” exclaimed the other, with much emphasis.

“Well, if the thing turn out as I hope it will, you shall be liberally rewarded for your trouble,” said Nokes,. “Shocking bad hats I think you have got,” he continued, first looking at the one and then at the other.

“*Very*,” answered the one, taking off his hat,

and putting his hand through a large hole in the crown.

“Shocking bad, indeed, Mr. Nokes,” observed the other.

“Here,” said Nokes, taking up two hats which were lying on the counter, and putting them on the heads of the agents; “here, take these best beavers in the meantime, I will settle with you in full in a few days.”

The agents quitted Mr. Nokes’ premises well satisfied with what they had got, coupled with their expectations of future reward.

Next morning Nokes wrote to each of the six “very ugly and very little men,” to meet him at two o’clock that day week, in the large room of the Coach and Horses; adding, that by so doing they would find it to their advantage.

The half-dozen hideous-looking little personages were “punctual as lovers” to the appointed hour, each indulging in a thousand conjectures as to the motives which prompted the

invitation, and the advantages to be derived. As neither of them knew that any one but himself had been invited, and as they were all strangers to one another, they were not only surprised but terror-struck, as they gazed on each other's frightful visages during the five minutes Nokes was behind his time. That circumstance, added to the mystery of the affair, was the reason why neither of them ventured to break the dead silence which prevailed.

The cause of Nokes's not appearing at the precise time appointed was this:—He had duly arrived with two of his friends at the Coach and Horses, a minute or so before two o'clock ; but not having previously apprised them or any one else of the object he had in view, he thought it would be better to take them into a private room and explain the whole matter to them, before introducing them to the proprietors of the half-dozen hideous physiognomies in the adjoining room.

“Gentlemen,” said Mr. Nokes, “you know that that fellow”—meaning Jones, of course—“you know that he has publicly libelled me, by calling me the ugliest little person in the universe. I mean, gentlemen, to prove in open court and before a jury of my countrymen, that the imputation is atrociously false; and a few days since I instituted an action against him with that view. I have got six men in the next room uglier and less than myself, whom I mean to bring before the jury, and whose stature and faces will disprove the malicious calumny. I have taken the liberty of asking you to come here to assist me in arranging matters with them for the intended trial.”

Mr. Nokes’ friends could not [have been more confounded had the house fallen about their ears. On partially recovering from their surprise, they exchanged most significant glances. It needed not the skill of a professed physiognomist to perceive what was passing in their minds; they thought that the anxiety and

annoyance of mind which the opposition of Jones had caused to the poor little man, had completely deranged his intellects. The propriety of putting him in a strait-jacket, and sending him to a lunatic asylum, were the first ideas that crossed their minds.

“Mr. Nokes,” said one of his friends, after a short pause; “Mr. Nokes, we don’t understand this; you surely are not serious.”

“I am, by ——,” answered Mr. Nokes, with singular energy; at the same time striking the table with great force.

“The matter you complain of, Mr. Nokes, is not actionable,” said another of his friends.

“Pooh, pooh! don’t you mistake yourselves; I know better than that,” said the little man, putting his hands into the breast of his waistcoat, and pulling himself up.

His friends at length, however, though not without the greatest difficulty, succeeded in convincing him that he was mistaken. And they extorted a promise from him that he would

withdraw the action, and not make an ass of himself. The next thing to be done was, to explain to the owners of the frightful frontispieces in the adjoining room the reasons why they had been invited by Mr. Nokes to the Coach and Horses, and to inform them of the turn which matters had just taken.

Nokes and his two friends introduced themselves for this purpose. One of the latter who was fond of a joke, after a fair quantum of "hems" and pauses, stated (Nokes all the while standing trembling at his back) that his friend Mr. Nokes had been stigmatised by Jones, the hatter in High Holborn, as the ugliest little man in the universe; and that, convinced the charge was unfounded, and not wishing to lie under it, he had determined on proving before a jury of his countrymen that there are uglier and "littler" men, even in London, than he. "For this purpose," added Nokes' friend, "he had invited you, gentlemen, to meet him here to-day, hoping that you

would have no objection, by appearing in court, to convict Mr. Nokes' accuser of falsehood. Allow me, gentlemen, to add, that you will, of course, be paid."

Here Nokes' friendⁱ was interrupted by the chorus of curses, loud and deep, which the half-dozen ugly little fellows vociferously invoked on the lilliputian head of poor Nokes. They also made an instantaneous rush towards the door, where Nokes stood at the back of his friends; and would doubtless have torn the pigmy hatter to pieces, had not his friends, who were fortunately able-bodied men, arrested their progress. Nokes rushed down-stairs, and made his escape. The visages of the half-dozen little fellows, if hideous at any time, were inexpressibly so now that they were made perfectly savage by the insult which Nokes had unintentionally offered them.

Jones, the day after being served with a notice of Nokes' action against him, had brought a cross-action against Nokes for defamation of

character. The friends of each party now clearly saw that, if a cessation of hostilities were not, by some means or other, brought about, the issue would be the bankruptcy of both. They accordingly agreed to use their best endeavours to bring about a reconciliation between the belligerents of High Holborn. Mr. Jones at once agreed to this; but little Nokes resolutely resisted for some time all offers of mediation by his friends. At last, one Saturday evening, one of his friends finding him in a more composed and more rational mood, said, familiarly, clapping him on the shoulders, "Nokes, my boy, do you recollect the story of the cats of Kilkenny?"

"The cats of Kilkenny!" said Nokes, hesitating for a moment, as if putting his powers of remembrance to the test. "The cats of Kilkenny! No, I don't think I ever heard of them partik'lar hanimals before."

"Come now, Nokes, try if you can't brush up that treacherous memory of yours a little

bit. I am sure you must have heard the story," said his friend, in a coaxing tone.

"The cats of Kilkenny!" said Nokes again. "Oh, I recollect now," exclaimed the little man, in great ecstacies, after a moment's hesitation. "The cats of Kilkenny which fought together till nothing but their tails were left,—I suppose you mean?"

"Precisely so, Mr. Nokes; and if you and Jones go on much longer in the way you have been doing of late, you will soon be both in a similar predicament; you will be ruined. You will, Mr. Nokes, you may rely on it."

This carried conviction to the mind of little Nokes; he at once signified his willingness to discontinue the war. By the interposition of mutual friends, a reconciliation was eventually brought about between the parties; and in less than six months afterwards they became such ardent friends, as to enter into partnership together. This was several years ago, and ever

since they have carried on a most prosperous business as hatters in High Holborn, and seem as attached to each other as if they had been "born brothers."

CHAPTER VIII.

A general election—Joseph attends several elections to report the proceedings—The election for the county of Dorset—The election for a neighbouring borough.

THOSE gentlemen connected with the morning papers, whose engagements are to report the proceedings in Parliament, are sent, at the period of a general election, into the various counties and towns throughout the kingdom, where contests are expected, for the purpose of reporting the proceedings. They are allowed, on such occasions, a guinea a day, over and above all coaching expenses,—their salaries running on, of course, as usual, at home. Reporters will sometimes be out attending the elections for a month at a time; and in most cases, two or three weeks elapse before their

return. A general election is, consequently, very expensive to the morning papers. I have known one general election cost a single paper about 2500*l*. There is an instance on record,—and a very recent instance too,—in which a solitary election in the north of England, cost a morning journal the enormous sum of 150*l*. The expenses were chiefly incurred in expressing the intelligence to London.

Joseph Jenkins was sent, soon after the date of the events recorded in the last chapter, into Somersetshire and some of the neighbouring counties, to attend the elections consequent on the dissolution of 1826, in that district. Contested elections are proverbial for the amusement they afford. The general election of 1826 was particularly prolific of fun. In the district allotted to Joseph, there were two elections which excited much interest, and afforded no ordinary amusement. One of these was a county, the other a borough, election.

The county election to which we allude, was

the election for Dorsetshire. At that election, which took place in the town of Ilchester, Mr. Henry Hunt, of Manchester massacre memory, opposed Sir Thomas Lethbridge. Perhaps more amusing or exciting scenes than those which took place in the course of this election, are not to be met with in electioneering records. In the metropolitan and provincial journals of the day, some account was given of the proceedings. No account, however, was nearly so ample as the one which we are about to give from Joseph's notes.

It may give the reader a greater relish for what follows, if we endeavour to convey to him some idea of the two principal performers in the extraordinary scenes to be related. Permit us, then, to state, that Mr. Hunt was a tall, corpulent, farmer-looking man, with a large, ruddy, jolly-looking countenance, and small laughing eyes. He was unequalled by any man we ever knew, in the felicity and readiness of his retorts. He was not to be put down or dis-

concerted. The more he was opposed, the more animated and amusing did he become. His opponent, Sir Thomas Lethbridge, was rather above the middle size, with (when we first saw him) a shrivelled face, and sallow complexion. His dress was slovenly, and he always wore leather unmentionables. His manner had a good deal of oddity about it, while, in his politics, he was then as ultra a Tory as Mr. Hunt was virulent in his Radicalism. Such were the antagonist candidates on this occasion.

The nomination of candidates having taken place two days previously, the Sheriff took his seat at ten o'clock in the County Hall on the first day of polling. Immediately afterwards, Sir Thomas Lethbridge, attended by several friends, made his appearance.

“Is Mr. Hunt here?” inquired the Sheriff, looking round the assemblage, to see whether he could discern the Radical candidate.

“No, he is not, sir,” answered one of the officers of the court.

“ But he'll be presently,” said one of Mr. Hunt's friends.

Scarcely had the latter finished his brief sentence, when a stern determined voice was heard in the passage,—“ If I don't do for old leather-breeches (Sir Thomas Lethbridge) before the election is over, may I be gibbeted.”

The appearance of Mr. Hunt, just as the last word was being pronounced, intimated to those in court who was the speaker.

Mr. Hunt, accompanied by a few friends, having taken his seat, the proceedings of the day commenced. The polling proceeded with great smoothness and regularity, until a Mr. Baker tendered his vote for Sir Thomas Lethbridge. Mr. Hunt objected to him on the ground that he kept the Post Office.

“ That's a falsehood,” said Mr. Baker.

Mr. Hunt.—As the old bird sings, the young bird learns. Miserable slave (addressing Mr. Baker), you but imitate the conduct of the candidate who whips you to the poll. What are

we to expect from such rascals,—fellows who are dragged up to make a member, whether they will or not?

Sir Thomas Lethbridge (looking Mr. Hunt full in the face).—What do you say, sir?

Mr. Hunt.—I say what I have said. (Laughter.)

The Sheriff.—I beg the candidates not to exceed the limits of gentlemanly conduct.

Sir Thomas Lethbridge.—I see some of my opponent's rabble ready to poll. Administer the oath to them, Mr. Under Sheriff, against bribery and corruption.

Mr. Hunt.—Oh, certainly; they will take the oath without hesitation; they will swear without a pale countenance or a quivering lip. There is not a slave—no, not one amongst them. What do you think of *that*, Sir Thomas? Eh, can you say as much for your crew?

Sir Thomas smiled contemptuously, but made no reply.

The Under Sheriff.—Mr. Hunt, it would be

desirable, if you could furnish us with a list of your voters : it would facilitate the business.

Mr. Hunt.—Bless your heart, sir, I can do no such thing. I do not even know the names of the gentlemen who mean to vote for me. They are no slaves. They are not whipped thither (looking contemptuously at Sir Thomas), as if they were a pack of reluctant curs. I don't keep a list of them, as I would of my dogs. Eh, Sir Thomas. (Laughter and cheers from his friends.)

“ We are as honest as Sir Thomas himself,” cried one of Mr. Hunt's supporters, “ and are ready to take the oath.”

Mr. Hunt.—Do you hear *that*, Sir Thomas? These are honest faces, (pointing to a body of his voters.) There is no roguery in those countenances. (Laughter, in which Sir Thomas joined.)

The polling was recommenced. Mr. Hunt objected to the vote of an attorney. “ That blood-sucker is not qualified.”

The Attorney.—It's a lie, Mr. Hunt, and ye *know* it.

Mr. Hunt.—Ay, ay; there they go again. You see, Mr. Sheriff, what a parcel of blackguards you and I have got to deal with. (Loud laughter and uproar.)

Sir Thomas Lethbridge.—The conduct of this person (Mr. Hunt) is intolerable. It is disgraceful.

The Sheriff.—I hope Mr. Hunt will abstain from the use of such indecent language for the future.

Mr. Hunt.—I will, Mr. Sheriff, if you muzzle the bull-dogs that Sir Thomas has brought here to bark at me. (Renewed laughter, in the midst of which, Sir Thomas and Mr. Hunt looked at each other as fiercely as if they had been a pair of tigers about to tear one another to pieces.)

Sir Thomas.—How dare you, sir, speak of my friends in such disgraceful terms?

Mr. Hunt (mimicking Sir Thomas).—*You!*

You ! He, he, he ; ha, ha, ha. (Bursts of laughter.)

Mr. Russell (a friend of Sir Thomas).—Down with the fellow. Down with the vagabond.

Mr. Hunt (pointing to Mr. Russell).—Just look at the cowardly ruffian. There's a rascal for you. Don't, my excellent friends, inflict the slightest punishment on the low-bred scamp.

Knowing that Mr. Hunt meant the reverse of what he said, one of his supporters knocked Mr. Russell's hat over his eyes and ears, and another ably seconded his purposes by tearing the tails of his coat and throwing them at Sir Thomas.

A Voice.—Mr. Hunt is the greatest black-guard in Christendom.

Mr. Hunt (looking in the direction of the place whence the sound proceeded).—Would that *gentleman* just favour us with a sight of his face ?

No response was made to Mr. Hunt's appeal.

Another Voice.—Hunt?

Mr. Hunt.—I hear you.

The Voice.—Your heart's a great deal blacker than your blacking.

Mr. Hunt.—If I only had the brazen-faced rascal here, I'd take the *shine* out of him without any loss of time. Oh, wouldn't I. (Laughter.)

Mr. Hunt then proceeded to read a copy of a letter, reflecting on the conduct of Mr. Messiter, a banker in Ilchester, a strenuous supporter of Sir Thomas Lethbridge.

Mr. Messiter.—It's all a falsehood, you contemptible fellow; and you *know* it.

Mr. Hunt.—Doodle, doodle, dee. (Roars of laughter.)

A gentleman, standing on the table, then said—"Hunt, you're a vagabond of the first water. I'll meet you to-morrow morning if you like.

Mr. Hunt.—Baa! baa! baa! (Renewed roars of laughter.)

Mr. Messiter.—You are the greatest villain that ever escaped the gallows.

Mr. Hunt.—Go home and mind your rags (meaning Mr. Messiter's bank notes), you old woman in man's clothes. (Loud laughter.)

Mr. Messiter.—I'm not afraid to look you, you hoary-headed rogue, in the face.

Mr. Hunt.—It's not the first time you've looked a rogue in the face when sitting opposite your brother Dick. (Shouts of laughter.)

Mr. Messiter.—It's like fighting with a chimney-sweep to contend with this worthless fellow;—a man gets blackened all over. The scoundrel ought to be sent at once to ——

“Where?” interrupted Mr. Hunt.

Mr. Messiter.—To the place your own conscience tells you you ought to have been sent to long ago; to the ——

“To the House of Commons,” suggested Mr. Hunt, preventing the other from completing his sentence.

Mr. Messiter.—No; but to a place which,

for the sake of others, I will not name; a place, however, where all is as black as your own heart or your own blacking. (Loud laughter.)

Sir Thomas Lethbridge.—There's no use, gentlemen, in trying to put this ruffian to shame. You can make no impression on him. His mind is as impervious as the hide of a rhinoceros.

Mr. Hunt (looking Sir Thomas in the face, and putting his physiognomy into a most ludicrous shape).—Ba, ba, boo; boo, boo, ba! (Roars of laughter.)

Sir Thomas.—The fellow (Mr. Hunt) is not a fit associate for even chimney-sweeps. He is a thoroughly contemptible animal.

Mr. Hunt.—I say, Sir Thomas.

Sir Thomas.—Well, sir, say on.

Mr. Hunt.—Will you listen for a moment?

General cries of "Hear him, Hear him."

Mr. Hunt.—Sir Thomas is afraid to hear.

Sir Thomas.—You utter a falsehood, you low-minded and low-mannered scamp; and,

what is more, you *know* it. I would feel ashamed of myself if I could be afraid of anything which a contemptible fellow like you could say.

Mr. Hunt.—But will you hear me, old leatherbreeches? (Loud laughter.) Will you lend me your *long* ears for a single moment? (Renewed roars of laughter, in which the Sheriff and all the friends of Sir Thomas joined.)

Sir Thomas, annoyed by the epithet “long” ears, especially as his own friends could not refrain from joining in the peals of laughter which proceeded from the assemblage, took no notice of his antagonist’s appeal.

Mr. Hunt.—He is silent. I told you, gentlemen, he was afraid of what I was going to say.

Sir Thomas (with great energy, and evidently under the deepest mortification).—You lie, you old ruffian.

Mr. Hunt (with a most provoking coolness).—Then will you hear me?

Sir Thomas.—Say on, you consummate vagabond.

The attention of the vast assemblage was now wound up to the highest pitch, every one expecting that Mr. Hunt was about to say something of the greatest importance. In the midst of this breathless attention, Mr. Hunt, putting on the oddest imaginable expression of countenance, and, pointing with his fore-finger to Sir Thomas, who stood only a few feet from him, said, in the most comic tones of voice—
“Bow, wow, wow!”

No words can convey any idea of the ludicrous effect of this extraordinary sally of Mr. Hunt. The thousands present burst forth in one loud and simultaneous roar of laughter, which lasted for several minutes. When the assemblage had literally laughed till, from physical exhaustion, they could laugh no more, Sir Thomas said—
“If, gentlemen, any other person present were to conduct himself as this extraordinary animal has done, I should feel bound to take notice of

it; but this despicable ruffian is privileged to do or say with impunity what he pleases.

Mr. Hunt.—What did I say, Sir Thomas?

Sir Thomas.—You said——

“Bow, wow, wow!” cried Mr. Hunt, interrupting Sir Thomas, and again pointing to him in the irresistibly ludicrous manner he had done before.

Renewed roars of laughter proceeded from all parts of the meeting.

Sir Thomas.—I appeal to you, Mr. Sheriff, whether an end ought not to be put to these disgraceful proceedings.

Mr. Hunt.—You have called me, Sir Thomas, an extraordinary animal.

Sir Thomas.—And so you are, and one of the worst and vilest of the animal species.

Mr. Hunt.—You’re a fowl (pronounced fool). You belong to the feathered tribe. (Laughter and uproar.) You’re a porcupine, Sir Thomas, and before I’ve done with you I’ll make you look like one.

Renewed uproar and peals of laughter followed, in the midst of which the Sheriff, by adjourning the hall, put an end to the proceedings for that day.

The result of the contest is generally known. Mr. Hunt, after two or three days polling (the voting for counties at that time lasted for fifteen days), seeing his adversary too far in advance of him, to justify the most slender expectation of an eventual triumph, retired from the field of conflict.

Joseph Jenkins, finding that his occupation in Ilchester, like that of Othello's, was gone, in consequence of the unexpected retirement of Mr. Hunt, proceeded to a neighbouring town, to watch and report the proceedings of an election there, which, it was generally known, could not, from the equally divided state of parties, fail to be very keenly and closely contested. The Hon. Mr. Abingdon stood in the Tory interest, and Mr. Movement was the Liberal candidate. The colours of the

former were blue, and those of the latter yellow. Never in the annals of electioneering contests had there been a more equal conflict. From the commencement to the close of the polling, neither candidate, though the constituency consisted of 852 good and true electors, got a dozen votes a-head of the other. What added to the intense interest felt in the issue of the contest, was the circumstance of the candidates being, until near the close of the election, alternately two or three in advance of each other. It is unnecessary to add, that the uncertainty of the result led to the most extraordinary exertions on the part of the friends of either candidate. To be sure, Mr. Movement was decidedly the popular candidate among the non-electors, or the "swineish multitude," as Burke used to call them. If their "sweet voices" had been worth anything, the Liberal candidate would have gained his election by a majority of twenty to one; for it was ascertained by those who had had most experience

in such matters, that on the nomination day, though the constituency, as already remarked, consisted of only 852, the number of hands held up for Mr. Movement was at least from 15,000 to 16,000. In fact, there was only about a score of hands held up for his opponent; and these, instantaneously attracting towards them, as if by some unaccountable magnetic influence, a host of bludgeons belonging to the democracy, vanished with an electric rapidity. It was curious to see, that, on the days of polling, notwithstanding the disparity in the numbers of those who supported the respective candidates on the day of nomination, they should be so nicely balanced, that, from the commencement till the close of the election, it was quite a toss-up which of them was destined to triumph. By the middle of the last day of polling, Mr. Abingdon's twenty supporters had increased to 402; while of Mr. Movement's 15,000 or 16,000 zealous friends, not more than 400 were, at the same

hour, found to have recorded, at the polling booths, their names in his favour. The contest being thus so exceedingly close, the excitement in the town¹ was correspondingly great. There was scarcely a person in the place that did not become a decided partisan of either candidate. Blue or yellow favours, according to the politics of the wearers, were to be seen affixed to every hat, or attached to the breast of the party's coat. On the close of the first day's voting, Mr. Abingdon, seeing himself only two ahead of his opponent, resolved on trying the effect of a copious propagation of porter on the "state of the poll." The breweries of the place were all exhausted of their supplies, in order that the rabble should not, through want of the inspiration of porter, be wanting in zeal for the Tory candidate. The populace promptly drank Mr. Abingdon's porter; but he found, by three o'clock on the following day, that, so far from their liberal libations bettering his condition on the poll, they had the effect of reducing his ma-

jority of two, at the close of the first day's proceedings, to a minority of three,—the numbers standing thus:—

Abingdon . . . 421

Movement . . . 424

The poll could only be kept open one hour longer; and it was ascertained that only four more electors could be expected to vote, the remaining few electors living at a distance from the place. What was to be done, under these desperate circumstances, to reduce the majority of the Liberal candidate? Mr. Abingdon confidentially consulted with the chairman of his committee, and the result of their deliberations was, an unanimous resolution—unanimous we mean on the part of Mr. Abingdon and his chairman—that any amount of money that might be asked should be given for the remaining four votes. It was soon found that the minds of three of the electors were open to the conviction usually produced by the logic of gold: they were, in short, not only purchasable, but

promptly purchased. The fourth, and now the only outstanding elector, Adam Hogg, was not to be found : no one could tell whether he was to be forthcoming or not. Adam was a plain, blunt, honest, man, with a slight dash of eccentricity about him. He was a sort of costermonger, and was daily to be seen driving his donkey and cart in the town or its neighbourhood. He was neither Tory nor Liberal ; he was quite the creature of caprice. His conduct, however, was always the result of *honest* impulses. Had the Tory candidate offered him thousands for his vote, the offer would have been indignantly rejected. Nor was there the slightest chance of reasoning him out of his opinions. Once formed, he clung to them with a desperate tenacity. No one, on the present occasion, was able to form an opinion as to the side on which he would vote, should he vote at all ; for, at previous elections, he had voted for Tory or Liberal candidates, just as the whim happened to strike him. It was now within

ten minutes of the time for closing the poll, and the candidates were equal, the state of the poll standing thus:—

Abingdon . . . 424

Movement . . . 424

At this moment an announcement was made that Adam had been seen a few minutes previously, and would presently make his appearance to vote. It is impossible to convey an idea of the intensity of the anxiety now felt by the friends of the respective candidates. It was visibly depicted in every countenance. Not more grave could the assembled thousands have looked had they been in momentary expectation of a sentence of death being pronounced upon them. The stillness which now everywhere reigned, was made more striking by reason of the uproar and confusion which so recently prevailed. The contrast was remarkable in the highest degree, and the more so because of the suddenness of the transition from the previous noise and bustle to the present death-like

silence and stillness. At the very moment that this absorbing anxiety had reached its height ; when, indeed, the friends of both candidates—and, of course, the candidates themselves—were in an agony of suspense ; at that very moment Adam Hogg was descried at a distance of some hundred yards advancing, astride on his donkey, towards the polling place. Every bosom now beat with, if possible, increased anxiety. The alternations of hope and fear, as the decisive moment approached, succeeded each other with a terrible rapidity and power. A few seconds more, and Adam had advanced sufficiently near to enable the more quick-sighted of the Tory party to discover a profusion of Mr. Abingdon's favours around the donkey's ears. Intelligence of the fact, as if by some invisible telegraph, was communicated with the rapidity of thought to the mind of every Tory present, and a tremendous shout of applause instantly burst from their throats. In those plaudits the Liberals read the death-warrant of their hopes,—heard

the death-knell of their expectations. A sickly paleness suddenly overcast their countenances. On the other hand, the faces of the Tories were flushed with the excess of their joy. So marked, indeed, was the contrast which the countenances of the Tories and Liberals now presented to each other, that the least experienced physiognomist might, from a hasty inspection of the faces before him, have singled out, with unerring certainty, the Tories and the Liberals, and arranged them into their respective classes. A few moments more, and Adam was in the centre of the crowd, making his way to the polling booth, amidst the deafening hurrahs of the Tories, and the groans and hisses of such of the Liberals as were able, in the excess of their grief, to articulate sounds of any kind. To the Tory plaudits Adam responded by a succession of most hearty hurrahs, whirling his hat at the same time, with desperate vehemence, around his head. Another moment, and, without alighting from his jackass,

Adam, in answer to the question from the functionary officiating on the occasion, as to which of the candidates he wished to vote for, shouted, at the top of his voice, “For *Movement*, to be sure! Hurrah for Mr. Movement!” To describe the scene which followed were out of the question; it is impossible to form any adequate conception of it. Oh, the confusion and consternation of the Tories! Oh, the exultation of the Liberals! Had the earth been in the act of opening up to receive the former into its capacious bosom, they could not have appeared more horror-struck. Had the heavens been showering down gold, in copious abundance, into the pockets of the latter, they could not have looked one whit more delighted.

“You have made a mistake—you have voted for the wrong candidate,” cried the chairman of Mr. Abingdon’s committee, as soon as he had sufficiently recovered from his confusion to be able to speak.

“ Oh, there’s no mistake : I knows vat I’m about,” said Adam, amidst the deafening cheers of the Movement party.

“ Why, you’ve voted contrary to your colours,” remarked another of Mr. Abingdon’s friends.

“ Vy, them’ere’s not *my* colours ; they be my donkey’s colours. Don’t you see them about his long ears ? ”

Roars of laughter from the Liberals greeted this display of humour on the part of Adam.

“ You ought to be ——,”

“ Mr. Movement for ever ! ” shouted Adam, interrupting another of Mr. Abingdon’s friends, who was about to address some condemnatory remark to him.

“ Sir,” said a third of Mr. Abingdon’s friends, addressing himself to Adam, “ your conduct is most ——,”

At that moment the clock struck four, when a loud shout simultaneously burst from a thou-

sand voices,—“Movement is the member!” followed by a succession of the most tremendous peals of applause which ever greeted the triumph of a candidate.

CHAPTER IX.

Joseph's increasing embarrassments—Changes his lodgings—
An adventure with a bailiff in his new lodgings.

EVER since his connexion with the morning journal to which repeated reference has been made, Joseph had been living up to his means, and very often considerably above them. No one will be surprised at the result: he had been gradually getting into debt, and his debts had latterly become very troublesome to him, because his creditors had become very clamorous. Everyone who has studied the philosophy of debt, and especially those who have done so practically, must have been struck with the fact, that after one's pecuniary obligations have existed for a certain length of time, they not

only subject the party to all the annoyance of being doggedly dunned for payment ; but they begin, by means of the expenses incurred in law proceedings instituted for their recovery, to increase in amount with an appalling rapidity. And if the practice of not paying one's debts until compelled by law, is allowed to go on for any length of time, the result will be the impossibility of paying at all. No man ever yet continued for many years to act on the principle of not paying his just debts until forced to do so by the resistless compulsion of the law, without in the end becoming the victim of his own imprudence and his own want of honesty. Joseph was now in a fair way of being placed in this unpleasant pecuniary predicament. For a season, and a very long season too, he had managed by plausible promises to put off his creditors from time to time. He found, however, that obtaining their consent to a little longer time, was not synonymous with cancelling the obligations under which he lay to them. He,

moreover, made the discovery, that just as the stream is stemmed for a time only to rush onwards with greater force and rapidity when the obstruction is removed, or has been broken through,—so the temporary silence of creditors is sure to be succeeded by a far greater clamour than that which had been previously raised when demanding payment of the money due. Joseph now found himself in this situation. He had put off his creditors till they would be put off no longer; and the remembrance of his oft-renewed and as often violated promises to pay, only served to make them more resolute in the determination to have their money by some means or other.

The result of this was, that he was driven about from one lodging to another like a hunted hare. Bailiffs were constantly in quest of him; and whenever he had reason to believe that his place of abode was discovered, there was no alternative but either to pay the debts for which he was most hotly pursued, or to seek a

further respite from the persecution of bailiffs, by repairing to some new obscure lodgings.

To have a pack of clamorous creditors constantly dogging one's steps, and ready like so many beasts of prey to pounce upon their victim the moment they can get him into their clutches, is a very uncomfortable condition to be in. So soliloquized Joseph; and he was doubtless right. To be incessantly hunted by hungry creditors, resolved not on any account to relinquish their pursuit until they shall either get their money, or infix their talons in the person of their creditor; to be in this situation, must be one of the most miserable situations in which a human being can be placed. But then, Joseph found it convenient to forget—and persons in his situation usually contrive to forget—that he was the aggressor; that he first injured his creditors by getting into their debt, without ever bestowing a moment's consideration as to whether or not there was any reasonable prospect of his ever being

able to discharge the obligations which he came under to them.

With the view of keeping as much as possible out of the reach of his creditors, who were now pursuing him more hotly than ever, Joseph resolved on taking lodgings in the second floor of a miserable-looking house in the neighbourhood of Clare Market; a place which he thought likely to be among the last suspected, inasmuch as both the house and the locality somewhat decidedly contrasted with his appearance and manners. The landlady was a short, stout, bustling middle-aged Irishwoman, named Phiddy O'Callaghan, who had not been many years in the metropolis, and who had for a still shorter period sought to earn a livelihood by letting furnished lodgings. She had only, indeed, sustained the latter character twelve months, commencing precisely three months after the death of her husband, who, according to her own account, was one of the greatest "jewels of a man that ever ould Ireland sent across the

channel." Mrs. O'Callaghan, who flattered herself that she was a great physiognomist,—so great as to tell by the first glance of one's countenance whether he was a rogue or an honest man,—was exceedingly taken with Joseph, when, in compliance with the invitation addressed to him by a small piece of thick paper stuck up in the window, containing the brief announcement—"Lodgings to let,"—he presented himself at the door to ascertain the quality and terms of her lodgings. The feeling of satisfaction was reciprocal, Joseph being in that state of mind to be pleased with anything and everybody, provided he could only contrive to keep himself concealed from his creditors. Lest, however, his hiding-place should be discovered, he expressed to Mrs. O'Callaghan a particular wish, that on no account she should ever say to any one who might call, that he was within, adding that he had a great many friends who were desirous of intruding themselves into his company whether he would or not. In fact, he

continued, his principal object in leaving his previous lodgings, and taking Mrs. O'Callaghan's, was to escape the visits of friends whose excessive anxiety to cultivate his acquaintance and to be in his society, was to him, who was fond of retirement, quite a bore. Joseph concluded by plainly intimating to Mrs. O'Callaghan, that the term of their connexion as landlady and lodger would most probably altogether depend on her attention to his wishes in this respect, and on the success with which she should keep outside the door those who might manifest a very particular wish to have a little of his company.

“ Lave that to me, sir, if you plase,” said Mrs. O'Callaghan, in tones which clearly denoted that she was determined to carry Joseph's wishes fully into effect.

“ But may I,” she continued, “ be afther taking the lave of axing what's your honour's name ?”

“ Oh, ay,” answered Joseph ; “ I forgot that

very important part of the business. My name is Benjamin Brackenordorchy."

"And, sure, a very good Christhian-like name it is, too," said Mrs. O'Callaghan, "though may be it is not aisy at first to get one's tongue about it."

"A little practice," remarked Mr. Joseph, "will overcome the difficulty."

"Ay, throth, and you may be after saying that; for practice will overcome anything."

Joseph inwardly demurred to the soundness of the position. Practised as he was at the attempt to quell the clamours of his creditors, he found himself not a whit more successful now than he was at the first. On the contrary, he found they only grew the more difficult to manage, the longer he had to deal with them, and the more extensive his transactions became.

All preliminaries being settled to the satisfaction of both parties, Joseph, in less than a couple of hours, took possession of his new

lodgings. Ashamed, however, both of his lodgings and the locality in which they were situated, he resolved on concealing from even his most intimate acquaintances, the place of his new abode. With that view, he dated all his letters from the office of the weekly journal with which he was connected, which, as a matter of course, secured the answers being sent to the same address.

Creditors, however, are very prying people. There is no possibility of long concealing oneself from them. One of Joseph's creditors found out his new locality before he had been eight days in it; and it was surprising with what rapidity all the others made the same discovery. In fact, the discovery may be said to have been instantaneous.

The calls on Joseph immediately became numerous. Mrs. O'Callaghan stoutly denied to one and all of the "friends of Mr. Jenkins," as they called themselves, that there was any such person, "hathen or Christian," in her house.

And this she did in perfect good faith; for she was still in ignorance of Joseph's real name. Some of the inquirers after Mr. Jenkins being ungallant enough to doubt Mrs. O'Callaghan's word, she called them "unbelieving infidels," and threatened, that if they did not go away "in pace, she would be after smothering every soul of them." In fact, from morning till night, was the door of Mrs. O'Callaghan's house a scene of perpetual squabbling between herself and persons desirous of being introduced, or, rather of being allowed to introduce themselves, to Joseph.

One of the bailiffs, a little conceited pragmatist fellow, who had been remarkably regular in his visits three times every day—morning, noon, and night—but had always been kept at bay by Mrs. O'Callaghan,—determined one day to effect an entrance by some means or other. Accordingly he presented himself at the door of the inaccessible house, and inquired, as before, whether Mr. Jenkins was within.

“Sorrow Mr. Jenkins you, you impudent spalpleen, isn’t it myself has told you twenty blessed times, that there’s no such person in this Christhian house.”

“Is there any other person, then?” inquired the server of writs.

“What’s that to you, ye unhangd rascal?” replied Mrs. O’Callaghan, in tones which told that she had been worked up to a pitch of the strongest excitement.

“It’s everything to me, ma’am, and you’ll very soon find that to your cost,” said the other.

“What do you mane, you worthless vagabone?” retorted Mrs. O’Callaghan.

The man of writs, instead of answering the question, made an attempt to force his way past Mrs. O’Callaghan, who was standing holding the door half open in her hand. He succeeded so far as to effect an entrance, and to reach the first step of the stairs, when, just as in the act of putting his right foot on it, Mrs. O’Callaghan

flew at him like a tigress, and, seizing him by the tails of the coat, pulled him back with such force, as to cause him to fall in the passage in the most awkward manner which it were possible to imagine. He, however, speedily regained his feet, and made another attempt to force his way up-stairs, when Mrs. O'Callaghan, snatching up a child's chair which lay at her feet, hurled it at him with all the strength which she possessed. It hit the poor little bailiff with tremendous effect on an anonymous place. The blow had the effect of stunning him for the moment, when Mrs. O'Callaghan laid hold of him a second time. A scuffle ensued, in the midst of which, the landlady screamed aloud, "Help! Help! Murther! Murther! Mr. Braknorky (Brackenordorchy), if you don't come to my assistance immadiately, I'll be kilt entirely."

No answer was made to Mrs. O'Callaghan's adjuration, at which she was very much astonished. She renewed the appeal, but with no better success. At length the bailiff achieved

his release from her grasp, and bounded upstairs with the agility of a grey-hound. Mrs. O'Callaghan followed as hard at his heels as her short fat person would permit, showering upon him all the way, the most copious and most varied abuse. The other had the impudence to enter, without knocking, at the door, or waiting to learn whether or not his presence would be agreeable, to every accessible apartment in the house. Hitherto he had searched without success. No Mr. Jenkins, nor Mr. Brackenordorchy, nor Mr. Any-body-else, was to be seen. Joseph, who had overheard the squabble at the front door between the bailiff and his landlady, immediately secreted himself in a large cupboard in a room on the second floor. The moment the bailiff had reached the landing of the third floor, he crept out of his hiding-place, and was in the act of making his escape down-stairs, when an idea suddenly struck him. He felt assured that his enemy would make a general search in the upper part of the house,

not even omitting the particular apartment in which a newly-married pair—an able-bodied Irishman, Patrick Shannon, and his young wife—resided. Joseph knew, moreover, that Mrs. Shannon, who was pretty as well as young, and possessed great spirit, was within, and that the husband was employed in a house hard by. He, therefore, determined to carry out the idea he had formed, stole softly up the stairs, and attentively listened to the sound of the bailiff's footsteps, or to his voice. In a few seconds he heard him walk into Mrs. Shannon's apartment, which was bed-room and all. The newly-married young woman was at work with her needle. In a moment more, he heard Mrs. Shannon roundly abusing the little man of writs, for daring to intrude into her room; while he was most energetically asserting that he had done so in the performance of his duty, and was only looking out for a friend to whom he wished to say a few words. "Thunder and lightning," exclaimed Mrs. Shannon, "and is it here you're

after seeking your friends? May be if Pat Shannon happen to drop in, and find you in this same place, it were better for you if you had been at a rasonable distance from it, you —”

The sudden shutting of the door, by some invisible agency, followed by the instantaneous turning of the lock, prevented Mrs. Shannon from finishing her sentence. “By the powers!” she exclaimed, “what does this mane?”

The bailiff was too much confounded to utter a word.

“Spake, sir,” resumed Mrs. Shannon, energetically; “and by the blessed Virgin, tell me what brought you here. It is’nt for no good, I’ll be bound.”

“I came to inquire for Mr. Jenkins,” stammered the bailiff.

“That’s all a thundering lie, and ye know it. You had better take yourself out of this as fast as you came in; for by ——, if Paddy Shannon chance to come in and find you here, he’ll glue your heels to the ceiling in a jiffey.”

“But how shall I get out?” inquired the man of writs, in great alarm.

“The way you got in,” replied Mrs. Shannon, drily.

The bailiff attempted to open the door, but the latter was obstinate. It was, as already remarked, locked on the outside.

“The door arn’t open,” said he, in piteous tones.

“Ah, then, my husband will be here immediately, and sure he won’t be long in opening it for you.”

The ‘servant of the law’ trembled from head to foot.

While this dialogue was going on, another was taking place between Joseph and his landlady on the landing of the second floor.

“What can the brute baste,”—to wit, the bailiff,—“mane by acting in this way?” inquired Mrs. O’Callaghan.

“He can mean no good; that’s clear,” replied Joseph.

“Och, and your right there, any how. It's as plain as a Kerry mountain.—Maister Brackenordorchy,” said Mrs. O'Callaghan, with a special emphasis, after a moment's pause.

“Yes, ma'am.”

“Will you be after answering me one question I'm going to ax?”

“If I can, Mrs. O'Callaghan,” said Joseph.

“Can you inform me what's the reason why so many persons call for a Mr. Jenkins, and seem so very anxious to see him, while not a mother's son ever inquires after you, Mr. Brackenordorchy, though you expected a power of visitors?”

“Your question, Mrs. O'Callaghan, is too difficult for me to answer.”

“Do you know, or did you ever hear of, any gentleman of the name of Jenkins?”

“Oh, I have heard of several gentlemen of that name,” replied Joseph. “But, Mrs. O'Callaghan, had you not better send immediately for Mrs. Shannon's husband, and inform him

that some rude ruffian has forced his way into his wife's room?"

"Och, sure and sertain, I forgot that! Feargus, my darlint," continued Mrs. O'Callaghan, thrusting her head down-stairs as far as it could safely go, and addressing herself to a ragged boy, her only son, about eight years of age, who was in the parlour.

"Yes, mother," said the urchin, opening the door, and looking attentively up-stairs to the party who first introduced him into the world.

"Run, haste, fly, my jewel! and tell Pat Shannon that there's a hathen-looking man locked in the room with his wife."

"Yes, mother," said the boy; but scarcely had the affirmative response to Mrs. O'Callaghan's appeal to her son been yielded by the latter, than the street-door opened, and Mr. Shannon entered.

Mr. Shannon was a good-looking athletic man, dressed in the habiliments of a day-labourer, whose countenance seemed to express,

as plainly as if the fact had been written on his forehead in legible characters, that he was a man about whose determination of character there could be no mistake.

“Och, and may St. Patrick and all the blessed saints be praised for another sight of yer honest face, Pat Shannon,” exclaimed Mrs. O’Callaghan, in joyous accents, as the other entered.

“What’s the matter, Mrs. O’Callaghan,” inquired Pat, eagerly.

“Is it what’s the matter yer after axing, when yer jewel of a wife’s in danger of her life in resisting the indacent liberties of as great a blackguard as ever disgraced the ground he trod on? He’s locked himself into the room with her.”

Pat needed not another word. He sprung up the three pair of stairs with the rapidity of thought, turned the lock (Joseph had left the key in the door), and rushed into the room, pouncing like a bear upon the poor bailiff, and

exclaiming, as he seized him by the throat,—
“What brought you here, you big blackguard?”

The little officious, self-consequential personage, seeing himself suddenly in the hands of a huge infuriated Irishman, trembled from head to foot. He was too terrified to utter a word. At length the brief sentence struggled through his pent-up throat—“I only came into the house in the execution of my duty.”

“And was it your duty, you mighty big ruffian, to lock yourself into the room with my wife? Phiddy, my honey,” turning to his wife, “did he hurt you at all at all?”

“Faith and he didn’t, for I wouldn’t let him,” replied Mrs. Shannon.

It never occurred to Pat, that the bailiff could hardly have locked himself in, when he found the key outside the door.

“I’ll explain all if you’ll only allow me,” cried the affrighted little man.

“To purgatory with your explanations, you ugly-looking monster,” said Mr. Shannon, and

with that he threw the other on the ground. "Now, you big rogue," he continued, shaking his fist in the face of the prostrate and half-expiring bailiff; "now, you big rogue, will you ever meddle with my wife again?"

"I did not—did not——"

The little writ-deliverer was about to attempt a denial and explanation, but was interrupted by Pat, who again demanded, on pain of grinding the bailiff into powder, an answer to his question, whether he would ever again venture, uninvited, into the presence of his wife.

"I did not, I ——"

The bailiff was again in the act of attempting a denial and explanation, when Mr. Shannon a second time, shaking his clenched fist in his face, repeated his demand for an answer to his question.

"Never," said the bailiff.

"Then, you brute baste," said Pat, withdrawing a few steps so as to let him rise, "then you brute baste, you may go about your business

this time, after you have fallen on your knees and asked Phiddy's pardon; but remimber, that if I ever see you here again, I'll show you a quicker road to the street than down the stairs."

"And sure, a passage out of the window is just what the baste desarves," said Mrs. O'Callaghan, who had all this time been a silent spectator of what was going on,—doubtless from a conviction that the bailiff could not be in better hands.

"Down on your knees, you blackguard, and ax Phiddy's pardon," said Pat, in authoritative accents.

"I assure you ——"

"I want none of the assurances ov' the likes ov' ye, ye unmannerly vagabone. Down on yer knees this moment, or I'll throw ye out at the window the next."

The poor terrified, trembling bailiff, deeming the former alternative to be, on the whole, preferable to the latter, fell down on his knees, and

looked up to Pat, as if waiting further instructions.

“Now, you baste, ax Phiddy’s pardon,” said the indignant husband.

“I humbly beg your pardon, ma’am, if I have offended you in any way,” said the affrighted official, in piteous accents.

“Rise up, ye spalpeen, and never let us see your ugly face again.”

And as the bailiff, shaking like an aspen leaf, arose and was hurrying out of the room, Pat, by way of a parting salute, gave him a whack on the head, which sent both his hat and his wig—for he wore a wig—down-stairs before him. Never did human being, not literally *thrown* down-stairs, or out of the window, make a more rapid descent from a third floor, than did the little bailiff on this occasion. He was in infinitely too great a hurry to pick up either hat or wig; but rushed into the street, and flew into the arms of a policeman who chanced to be passing at the moment. The unanimous

opinion of the spectators, of whom there was soon a goodly number, was, that the hatless, bald-headed, excited stranger, had just escaped from some lunatic asylum, or from the custody of his friends. The policeman considerately threw a handkerchief around his head, and escorted him, followed by a crowd of boys wondering what it could be all about, to the house of a friend in the neighbourhood. It is quite superfluous to add, that the bailiff did not repeat his visit to the domicile of Mrs. O'Callaghan.

CHAPTER X.

Joseph falls into arrears with his landlady—Unpleasant consequences—Awkward affair.

MATTERS went on with tolerable smoothness between Joseph and Mrs. O'Callaghan during the first nine or ten weeks of their relationship as landlady and lodger ; but the latter, having fallen in arrears, not only for the rent (four and sixpence per week) of his apartment, but for a variety of " sundries " which Mrs. O'Callaghan had procured for him from her own tradesmen, she began to think less favourably of him. Still, not wishing to lose a lodger if there was any probability of making his payments good, she thought it would be better to try the effect of a civil hint or two about payment, than to

come to an open rupture with him at once. Accordingly, she one morning knocked at his door, and, being invited in, said, in honied accents, that she must ax his pardon for what she was going to say, but she was sure that a gintleman like him would be afther pardoning a poor widow woman.

“ Oh, certainly, Mrs. O’Callaghan,” said Joseph, without waiting to hear what his landlady was about to say.

“ Ah, an’ its sirtain sure I was, that a gintleman like you would jist do that same,” remarked Mrs. O’Callaghan.

“ But what were you going to say, Mrs. O’Callaghan ?” inquired Joseph.

“ Well, sir, an’ if yer honour would not be takin’ it amiss, I was going to say that it would be a great obligation to me if it would be convenient to you to pay me my small bill of three pound six and sevenpence.”

“ Oh, ay, to be sure. Really, Mrs. O’Callaghan,” said Joseph, a good deal surprised by

the application, coupled with a consciousness of his inability to pay it, "really, Mrs. O'Callaghan, I owe you an apology for having allowed it to run on so long."

"I'll not trouble you, sir, for any 'pology," said Mrs. O'Callaghan, not having any definite ideas of what the word apology meant, "if you can only make it convenient to pay the bill."

"I'm really sorry, exceedingly sorry," said Joseph, "but it is not in my power to settle the little matter just now, having been making some large payments lately."

"I would not," pursued Mrs. O'Callaghan, "been afther axing it from you, but I have my rint to pay next week."

"Oh, next week!" exclaimed Joseph; "by that time I'll have plenty of money, and I give you my solemn promise you shall be honourably paid next week."

"Thank you, Mr. Brackendorchy. It's a very grate favour you'll be doing a poor honest woman. Good mornin', sir."

“ Good morning, Mrs. O’Callaghan.”

The latter had descended several steps of the stair, when, a thought suddenly striking her, she hastily returned, and re-opening the door of Joseph’s apartment and thrusting her head inside, said — “ Yer sure and sirtain, Mr. Brackenorchy, I’ve not offended you by axing the thrifle ? ”

“ Oh, not in the least—not in the least, I assure you, Mrs. O’Callaghan,” replied Joseph, in emphatic tones.

Thus re-assured, Mrs. O’Callaghan retired one of the happiest women in London,—or out of it. Three pounds some odd shillings was just the sum she wanted to make up her rent, and she now looked forward to quarter-day without, what she herself called, a “ taste of fear.”

Next week came, and so did the eve of quarter-day. Still there were no symptoms of Joseph’s bill being about to be paid. He came home that evening at the unusually early hour

of eight ; but it was now ten, and he had made no allusion to his promise of last week. “ Shall I ax him agin for the money ? ” inquired Mrs. O’Callaghan, addressing herself to herself. “ No, you’d bettther not,” she replied. “ Maybe, Judy O’Callaghan, he’ll be afther paying you early to-morrow mornin’,” she resumed, continuing the self-sustained dialogue.

And having come finally to the resolution to wait till she should see what the morning would do for her, Mrs. O’Callaghan went to bed.

To-morrow came, as every to-morrow will, until the death-knell of time itself shall sound. Having gone to bed the previous evening much earlier than usual, Joseph got up at the (to him) very early hour of ten in the morning. Mrs. O’Callaghan watched his every motion, lest he should slip out unknown to her. Every moment she expected, or rather *hoped*, she should be summoned into his presence to receive payment of her bill. No such summons came ; but

by-and-by Joseph himself was heard descending the stairs on his way out.

“Mr. Brackenordorchy,” said Mrs. O’Callaghan, just as he was in the act of opening the door. “I ax your pardon, sir, but you have forgotten to settle the thrifling account you so kindly promised me; and this is the day I have to pay my rint. Would it be convanient now.”

“Upon my honour, Mrs. O’Callaghan, I’m exceedingly sorry I cannot at this moment. I’ve been disappointed in a large sum due to me; but you may rely on it on Wednesday next, as on that day I am to receive £100 for a new work about to appear, of which I am the author. Will you take my word once more?”

“And sure I must, Mr. Brackenordorchy, if I can get nothing betther,” replied Mrs. O’Callaghan, drily.”

“I won’t deceive you, Mrs O’Callaghan.”

“I’ve only your own word for it, which you know I had before,” said Mrs. O’Callaghan, sarcastically.

“An accident only has made me break it,” remarked Joseph.

“An’ may not an aksident do the same agin?” replied the lodging-house keeper.

“Impossible—quite impossible,” returned Joseph. “My money on Wednesday next is as sure as the bank.”

“An’ *mine* too?” inquired Mrs. O’Callaghan, with an air of doubt.

“As certainly as the sun now shines. Good morning, Mrs. O’Callaghan.”

“Good mornin’ to ye,” responded the latter.

Immediately on Joseph shutting the door as he went out, Mrs. O’Callaghan hurried up-stairs to inform Mrs. Shannon, the occupant of the apartment on the third floor, of what had passed between Joseph and herself. They were not only both natives of the Emerald Isle, but were “flowers of the Kerry mountains;” and what was more still, were friends of the first water.

“But what did he mane?” inquired Mrs.

Shannon, after attentively listening to Mrs. O'Callaghan's narrative of what had occurred between her and Joseph at the street-door; "what did he mane by calling himself an athor?"

"Och, sure, an' isn't that the very thing that's been puzzlin' meself," replied Mrs. O'Callaghan.

"The athor of some work, did he say?"

"An' sure he did say that blessed same."

"Do ye know what he *does* work at?" pursued Mrs. Shannon.

"Sorrow a bit iv me does," answered Mrs. O'Callaghan. "But it cannot be much good, for he never comes home at *night* till late in the *mornin*."

"Mrs. O'Callaghan," said Mrs. Shannon, looking very serious and speaking with a peculiar emphasis.

"Yes, darlint."

"Shiver me to pieces iv I likes that word at all at all," said Mrs. Shannon.

"What word, my jewel?"

“That ugly spalpeen of a word, athor!”

“Nather do I, honey,” remarked Mrs. O’Callaghan. “I wish that somebody would explain its manin.”

“Do you know, Mrs. O’Callaghan, that I think it manes a murtherer.”

“The blessed Virgin and the holy saints protect us!” cried Mrs. O’Callaghan, starting from her chair, and eagerly crossing herself. “What makes you think so, Mrs. Shannon,” inquired the other, as soon as her alarm would permit her to put the question.

“Because,” said Mrs. Shannon, “as I was passing his door late last night, I overheard him spaking to himself; and wondering what could be the matther, I listened a little time, and heard him spaking about athors and murthers in the same breath.”

“May the blessed Virgin be with us!” cried Mrs. O’Callaghan, crossing herself a second time. “Are you sure yer ears have not de-
saved you?”

“ I’ll sware it on the holy cross. And may be if you listen to-night at his door, he may be heard agin spaking to himself.”

“ Thakleen, my jewel, will you sit up with me till he comes home to-night, and we’ll both listen at his door together. Its dangerous to have a hathen in the house that spakes to himself about murthers and murtherers.”

Mrs. Shannon agreed to Mrs. O’Callaghan’s proposal, and both accordingly awaited with the deepest anxiety the return of Joseph. He came home for the night at half-past ten, having some literary matters which required his immediate attention. Joseph was in the habit of speaking to himself, or as some prefer expressing it, thinking aloud; and the only wonder was, that neither Mrs O’Callaghan nor Mrs. Shannon had, in passing up and down the stairs, before overheard him when so employed.

Soon after Joseph had entered his room, he locked the door. The turning of the key was the signal for the two ladies to take their sta-

tion on the landing of the second floor. All the lights in the house, with the exception of that belonging to Joseph, had been previously put out. The pair of sentinels had not been two seconds at Joseph's door, when he recommenced his confirmed habit of speaking to himself. He was, however, it ought to be here remarked, addicted to the practice of suddenly lowering his voice; and the result was that only particular words of his sentences were generally caught. "Yes," he began, walking as he usually did through the room on such occasions, "I shall commit the robbery first and the murder afterwards."

"Mercy on us," whispered Mrs. O'Callaghan, "do you hear that?"

"Hush!" said Mrs. Shannon, "or you'll spoil it all," putting her hand on the mouth of the other.

"The devil's sure to be here," ejaculated Joseph.

"May everything that's good be about us,"

gasped the landlady. "The devil and he is intimate friends."

"Hold your pace, woman," said Mrs. Shannon, who exhibited a wonderful coolness on the occasion; "hold your pace, or we'll have no proofs against him."

Joseph continued—"As for the sheets, I'll throw them out of the window."

"Phiddy! Phiddy!" cried Mrs. O'Callaghan, restraining herself with difficulty from speaking aloud—"he's thrown my best linen sheets, which cost seven and sixpence, out of the window. Och, run down, jewel, and pick them up."

"Hold your tongue, ye foolish woman," whispered Mrs. Shannon, angrily; "he only says he *will* throw them out of the window."

"And," resumed Joseph, "he'll pick them up."

"There they go; there they go," said Mrs. O'Callaghan; "they'll be picked up in a moment." And she hurried down-stairs and rushed

into the street, to catch the assistant robber. To her surprise, neither thief nor sheets were to be seen. She again softly stole up-stairs, and took her station beside Mrs. Shannon.

“ And as for that old Irish hag, Mrs. O’Callaghan, I’ll ——”

“ Oh, the blackguard! Oh, the blackguard!” roared Mrs. O’Callaghan, in tones that Joseph could not have failed to hear, but for the noise caused by the heaviness of his own footsteps, and the loudness of his own voice, in conjunction with the deep reverie in which he happened to be at the moment. “ ‘ That old Irish hag, Mrs. O’Callaghan,’ indeed! And that’s the return which the brute baste makes for my laniency to him! Oh, the black-hearted vagabone! I’ll be revinged upon him: by the powers, I will!”

“ Yes,” continued Joseph, “ I’ll soon settle her hash for her.”

“ What does he mane by that?” inquired Mrs. O’Callaghan of her fellow-sentinel.

“ I don’t understand that,” replied Mrs. Shannon.

“ *I’ll* close her mouth ; *I’ll* stop the waggings of her vile tongue,” pursued Joseph.

“ Mrs. Shannon, do ye hear the ugly ruffian ? What *can* he mane ? ”

“ Hush, hush,” said Mrs. Shannon, “ and we’ll hear it all presently.”

Joseph continued.—“ The only thing about which I have any doubt is, as to the mode of the murder—whether it should be done by strangling, or blowing out her brains. Oh,” after a moment’s pause, “ I’ll blow out her brains at once. A bullet’s the thing. It does its work neatly, and no mistake.”

Loud cries of “ Murther ! murther ! ” proceeding from the stairs, prevented Joseph from completing his soliloquy. Mrs. O’Callaghan and Mrs. Shannon ran a neck-and-neck race down the stairs, screaming “ Murther ! murther ! ” all the way ; nor did they slacken either their pace, or their screaming, until they had reached

the middle of the street. Joseph, with candle in hand, hurried to the door of his apartment, and, without taking time to turn the key, burst open the door. Nobody, however, was to be seen, though he was certain that the screams of murder which had just broken so alarmingly on his ears, had issued from the stairs. After a moment's hesitation, he ran downstairs, found the street door open, and, on looking outside, saw Mrs. O'Callaghan and Mrs. Shannon surrounded by a large assemblage of persons. "That's him; that's the murtherer," cried both ladies in chorus, addressing two policemen, the moment Joseph presented himself at the door. The mob made a rush at him, and, but that the policemen got him pushed inside the house in time to save him, would, on the Lynch-law principle, have torn him to pieces on the instant. Joseph was told by the policemen that he must go to the Bow Street station-house, on a charge of attempting to murder his landlady. Utterly confounded at all this, he

inquired the meaning of such extravagant conduct.

“Och, you villain!” shouted Mrs. O’Callaghan, “and it’s nobody knows the maning of it better than yourself.”

“And wasn’t you,” cried Mrs. Shannon; “wasn’t you going to murther this dacent woman?” pointing to Joseph’s landlady.

Joseph vehemently protested that there was no truth in the charge: that any attempt or wish to murder his landlady was the most unfounded and preposterous idea that ever entered the head of a human being.

The policemen, however, heeded not his protestations. They dragged him away to the station-house, ironically remarking, that he would have an opportunity, on the following day, of convincing the magistrate of his innocence.

The reader is left to form the best idea he can of the state of mind in which our hero spent the night. The whole affair was still wrapt up

in as much mystery as ever. Charged with attempting the life of Mrs. O'Callaghan ! Why, he felt that he might, with equal justice, have been charged with contemplating the assassination of his sovereign. Whatever might be his other errors or crimes—and there were seasons when his conscience told him they were neither few nor small—he felt that he was as innocent as the child unborn of ever harbouring the idea, far less of attempting to carry it into execution, of taking away the life of a fellow-creature. Still, notwithstanding this consciousness of his innocence, he spent a most miserable night. He put his ingenuity to the rack, in attempting to imagine on what grounds so fearful a charge had been preferred against him. He could recollect nothing in his conduct, ever since he had become a lodger of Mrs. O'Callaghan, which could afford the slightest pretext for so grave a charge. Nor was the load of wretchedness which lay upon him, lessened by the remembrance of several instances in which

innocent persons had been convicted and even executed. The crime with which he was charged was not, it was true, at that time, a capital offence. Still the punishment might be transportation for seven or fourteen years; and he did not, by any means, relish the idea of being sent across the seas for either term; more especially for an offence of which he was as innocent as the magistrate himself, before whom he was to be brought on the following day.

The following day came in due course, and so did the moment at which Joseph was summoned into the presence of the magistrate. The charge of attempting to murder his landlady,—though, strictly speaking, even supposing Madams O’Callaghan and Shannon’s version of matters to have been correct, it ought only to have been “*meditating* the murder,” &c.,—the charge of attempting to murder Mrs. O’Callaghan was again preferred. Joseph reiterated to the magistrate what he had protested to the policemen, that the accusation was not only

unfounded, but that he had not the slightest idea on what it was grounded.

“ We shall at all events,” said the magistrate, “ soon learn the grounds of the charge, whether it be well founded or otherwise. Prosecutrix,” addressing Mrs. O’Callaghan, “ state the particulars of this case.”

Mrs. O’Callaghan.—Yes, yer honour.

Here the prosecutrix paused.

Magistrate.—Well, go on ; proceed.

Mrs. O’Callaghan.— Well, this gintleman, Mr. Braknorky (so she generally pronounced it), comes to me ten or twelve weeks ago, and says, says he, “ I sees ‘ Lodgings to let ’ in your window ; what may be the commodashun and the rint, and what —— ”

Here the magistrate interrupted Mrs. O’Callaghan, telling her that he did not want to hear anything about ten or twelve weeks ago, or taking the lodgings, but that he wished her to confine herself to the circumstances which had led to the charge preferred against the prisoner.

Mrs. O'Callaghan.—I ax your worship's pardon; I'll state the partiklars intirely, and nothin' else. Well, yer honour, the gintleman owes me eight weeks' rint, and a great many thrifles besides; and, two or three weeks ago, I says to him, 'Mr. Braknorky, may I ——'

"The Court does not," interrupted the magistrate, "want to hear anything about the state of pecuniary matters between you."

"Pecuniary matters, did yer worship say?" said Mrs. O'Callaghan, interrupting the magistrate in her turn. "Would yer honour be so obliging as to be afther telling me what that manes?"

Magistrate.—Why, money matters, to be sure.

Mrs. O'Callaghan.—Does your worship mane the rint of my lodgings?

Magistrate.—Yes, certainly, that or any other debt he owes you; but we don't want to hear anything about pecuniary matters just now.

Mrs. O'Callaghan.—Heaven bless yer honour's sowl, I understand you now.

Magistrate.—Well, proceed to state the circumstances connected with the charge against the prisoner.

Mrs. O'Callaghan.—I will, yer honour. The gintleman standin' there (pointing to Joseph) having owed me money for rint and other thrifles, I axed him one night, when it would be conwanient ——”

“Now you are again,” interposed the magistrate, tartly, “wandering from the subject. Unless you come to the point at once, I'll dismiss the case.”

“Then if you do, yer honour, my life's not safe for a second.”

“Then why don't you come to the case at once?”

“Well, now, yer worship, I will,” said Mrs. O'Callaghan, “this very instant. This lady (pointing to Mrs. Shannon) and myself both heard him, at eleven o'clock last night, coming

with a pistol in his hand to shoot my brains out, and we ——”

“*Heard* him!” interposed the magistrate; “heard him! Did you not see him?”

“No, yer worship; and, by the blessed Virgin, we did not wish to see him, either.”

“I don’t understand this at all,” said the magistrate. “Let the policeman, who was first on the spot, and took the prisoner into custody, tell the Court what he knows about the matter. Policeman, stand up.”

The policeman accordingly stepped into the witness-box.

Magistrate.—What do you know about this case, policeman?

“Vy, your worship, as I was a-passing, on my beat, near the door of this woman (Mrs. O’Callaghan), she and the other woman came both running into the street, calling out ‘Murder!’ In a few seconds afterwards, the prisoner rushed out after them, and the prosecutrix immediately said, ‘That’s him; that’s him; take him in

charge; he's been attempting to murder me.' The other woman—that one (pointing to Mrs. Shannon)—said that she was a witness to the attempt, and would take her oath to it. A mob immediately collected about the place, and it was with difficulty that another policeman, who had just come up, and myself, could prevent the prisoner from being torn to pieces. We, therefore, took him into custody."

Magistrate.—But did the prosecutrix tell you any of the particulars of the assault?

Policeman.—There was no assault, your worship.

Magistrate.—No assault! What do you mean, when the prisoner is charged with attempting the murder of the prosecutrix?

Policeman.—After the prisoner had been locked up in the station-house, we found, your worship, that it was a case of *meditating* the murder of his landlady.

Magistrate.—This is a very extraordinary business. The prisoner is charged with *attempt-*

ing to murder the prosecutrix ; and yet you now tell me the charge against him is only that of meditating or contemplating the murder.

Policeman. — The charge which she gave, your worship, and in support of which the other woman said she was ready to swear, was that of attempting to murder her ; but we afterwards found that it was only a case of *meditating* an attempt on her life.

Magistrate. — Well, state what you know about the matter.

Policeman. — What the prosecutrix has since stated to me was, that this other woman (Mrs. Shannon) having the night before overheard the prisoner walking through his room and speaking in a strange manner to himself, they both determined, on the evening in question, to listen outside his door. They had not been there many seconds when the prisoner again began speaking to himself in a very unpleasant tone of voice, as he paced backwards and forwards in the room. They heard ——

“Just step down one moment, policeman,” interrupted the magistrate; “we’ll perhaps get the parties themselves to tell us what they heard. Prosecutrix, step into the witness-box.”

Mrs. O’Callaghan did as she was desired.

Magistrate.—Mrs. O’Callaghan.

“Yes, yer honour.”

Magistrate.—Just tell us what you overheard when you and your friend were listening at the door of the prisoner.

Mrs. O’Callaghan.—I will, yer worship; and it shall be nothing but God’s blessed thruth, as sure and sertain as I have a sowl to be saved. The first ugly thing he said, yer honour, was that the devil was sure to be there that night. (Laughter.) Well, we didn’t much like the likes iv that. Next (for, yer honour, he meant to rob as well as murther me), next he said he would throw my sheets out of the window, and that some other vagabone would pick them up and run off with them. He then ——”

“ May I be allowed, sir ? ” said Joseph, interrupting Mrs. O’Callaghan, and addressing himself to the magistrate ; “ may I be allowed to say a few words, and I’ll at once explain all this ? ”

“ Not at present ; but you’ll have an opportunity of saying whatever you please, when the prosecutrix has made her statement. Prosecutrix, proceed.”

“ Well, yer worship,” resumed Mrs. O’Callaghan, “ after saying that he would throw my sheets out of the window, he said —— ”

“ Just stop a moment,” interposed the magistrate. “ And did the prisoner throw your sheets out of the window ? ”

Mrs. O’Callaghan.—No, yer honour, he did not. I ran down-stairs, and out to the street, but niver a sheet nor anything else did I see there.

Magistrate.—Are your sheets, then, still on your bed ?

Mrs. O’Callaghan.—They are, yer honour.

Magistrate.—So, then, there has been no robbery.

Mrs. O'Callaghan.—Och, and by my faith, yer honour, the rason of that same is as plain as a pikestaff; it's because he was prevented.

Magistrate.—Go on with your statement.

Mrs. O'Callaghan.—Then, says he, yer worship—didn't he, honey? (stopping abruptly, and turning to Mrs. Shannon).

“And faith he did, Mrs. O'Callaghan; as sure as I'm a livin' woman,” returned Mrs. Shannon.

The magistrate, as well as the spectators, could not help smiling at the readiness with which Mrs. Shannon, in true Irish style, came forward to ratify Mrs. O'Callaghan's statement before she had made it.

“What was the next thing the prisoner said?” inquired the magistrate.

“And sure if the blessed thruth must be spoken, yer worship, I'm ashamed to repate it.”

“We must hear it,” said the magistrate.

“ Ah, the villain that he is,” said Mrs. O’Callaghan, now for the first time working herself into a paroxysm of passion, gnashing her teeth, looking as fierce as a tigress at Joseph, and shaking her clenched fist in his face ; “ ah, the worthless villain that he is, he knows himself what he said. Indeed, indeed, he does, yer honour.”

“ Yes, but we must know it, too,” suggested the magistrate.

“ Well, then, yer honour, what then do you think the brute baste said ? He said, yer honour, that I was an old Irish hag.” (Roars of laughter, in which Joseph could not help joining.)

“ And throth he did, yer honour,” chimed in Mrs. Shannon, by way of corroborating the statement of her friend. “ He said, that old Irish hag, Mrs. O’Callaghan.” (Renewed laughter.)

“ What else did he say ? ” pursued the magistrate.

“He said, yer honour, that he’d soon settle my hash for me.” (Loud laughter.)

“Anything more?”

“Yes, yer worship, he said that he’d close my mouth, and stop the waggings of my vile tongue,—the big blackguard that he is.”

Mrs. O’Callaghan accompanied the latter clause of the sentence with a very emphatic stamp of her foot in the witness-box, coupled with a most savage look at Joseph.

“Well, but,” said the magistrate, “all that you have stated does not constitute any proof of an attempt on your life.”

“If yer honour,” replied Mrs. O’Callaghan, “will only stop a little, we’ll come to the murder part presently.”

“Well, proceed.”

“Then, yer worship, the next thing he said was, that he’d murder me intirely.”

“He *did*, yer honour,” interposed Mrs. Shannon. “He said he’d blow her brains out at once.”

“Yes, he did, yer honour, as I hope to be saved.”

“Did he say anything else?” asked the magistrate.

“We did not stay to hear anything else,” replied Mrs. O’Callaghan; “but ran out of the house for our lives, crying ‘Murther! murther!’ all the way.”

“And did he pursue you?” inquired the magistrate.

“He did, yer honour, as fast as his heels could carry him.”

“Did you hear any report of a pistol?”

“We could not hear anything, yer worship, we were so frightened,” replied Mrs. O’Callaghan.

“Policeman, did you see any pistol in the prisoner’s hand.”

“None, your worship.”

“Or find one in his lodgings?”

“We did not, your worship, though we made a most careful search.”

“Nor any other deadly weapon?”

“None, your worship.”

“What was the appearance of his room?”

“There was nothing in it, your worship, but a bed, a table, some chairs, and a quantity of books and writing materials.”

“Have you anything to say in addition to what has been stated by the prosecutrix?” said the magistrate, addressing himself to Mrs. Shannon.

“Nothing whatever, yer honour,” replied Mrs. Shannon, “except to say that it’s all the blessed thruth, and nothing but the thruth, that Mrs. O’Callaghan told you, as I’m a sinful woman.”

The magistrate now turned to Joseph, and asked him what he had to say respecting the charge on which he appeared before the Court.

“I’ll explain the whole matter, sir, in a few words, if you’ll only allow me,” replied Joseph.

“Oh, certainly; proceed,” said the magistrate.

“I’m really ashamed,” pursued Joseph, “to have to defend myself against so preposterous a charge; and I am sure, sir, that, when you have heard the statement I am about to make, the whole affair will appear equally ridiculous in your eyes.”

“The Court will hear what you have got to say,” remarked the magistrate, with a slight tinge of sarcasm in his manner, as if offended that Joseph should venture to anticipate his decision; “the Court will hear what you have got to say, and then it will form its own opinion as to the character of the charge.”

“Well, sir,” resumed Joseph, “the facts are these. It is ——”

“Don’t believe a word that he says,” cried Mrs. O’Callaghan, before he had uttered half-a-dozen words. “He is the mouth of a ——”

“Silence!” shouted the officer of the Court, interrupting Mrs. O’Callaghan in the midst of a sentence whose remaining member will readily suggest itself to the reader.

“ You have been heard patiently in making your statement,” said the magistrate, in a tone of reprehension, “ and you must not interrupt the prisoner in making his defence.”

“ Very well, yer honour,” said Mrs. O’Callaghan, making a clumsy curtsey to the magistrate.

“ Proceed with your statement,” said the magistrate, addressing himself to Joseph. But, correcting himself, he immediately added — “ Just stop a moment, if you please. Does any one,” looking round the Court, “ know the prisoner ? ”

“ I do, sir,” answered the gentleman who reported the proceedings of the Court for the morning papers. “ He is,” added the latter “ a highly respectable man.”

“ Now,” said the magistrate, addressing himself to Joseph, “ you may proceed with what you may have to say in your defence.”

Joseph bowed, and proceeded.—“ I was about to say, sir, when interrupted by this woman,

that it was quite true that, on the night in question, I did, in talking aloud to myself—which has long been a habit of mine—make use of the words which have been attributed to me; but, sir, as you will presently see, they admit of a very different construction from that which she and the other person have put upon them. The fact is, sir, that I am on the eve of bringing out a new book—a work of fiction—the last sheets of which are now passing through the press; and when I said, speaking to myself, that the devil was sure to be there, I merely meant the printer's devil, who I knew was to call that night for proofs which I received that morning. (Loud laughter.) And, with regard to the sheets of Mrs. O'Callaghan, which I am accused of having meant to steal, and, with that view, to throw them out of the window, I assure you, sir, that the only sheets which I had in my thoughts were two proof sheets of my forthcoming work which I had ready, corrected for the printer, and which, whenever I should hear

his devil ring at the door, I meant to throw out over the window, to save Mrs. O'Callaghan the trouble of letting him in. (Renewed laughter.) With ——"

"Oh, yer honour, there's not a word of blessed thruth in what he's ——" Mrs. O'Callaghan was in the act of again interrupting Joseph, but was interrupted herself by the magistrate ordering her to be silent, and threatening to remove her out of the Court, should she again attempt to interrupt the prisoner.

Joseph resumed. — "With respect to the application of the epithet 'old Irish hag,' to Mrs. O'Callaghan (who here looked most ferociously at Joseph), I admit that it was improper, and am sorry for it. In reference to the phrases, 'Soon settle her hash,' and 'Stop the waggings of her vile tongue,' I only meant that I should be able next week to pay her the small amount I owe her."

Roars of laughter followed this statement, in which the magistrate joined—Mrs. O'Callaghan,

in the meantime, looking daggers at Joseph, and muttering to herself, in the excess of her indignation, which well-nigh choked her—"Oh, the blackguard! oh, the villain! oh, the big vagabone! He richly deserves the gallows!"

"I am sure, sir," resumed Joseph, again addressing himself to the magistrate, "that, after what I have said, you are satisfied the other expression made use of—namely, 'I'll blow her brains out at once'—had no more reference to Mrs. O'Callaghan than to the King on the throne. The fact was, that I had made, in my own mind, a sudden transition from Mrs. O'Callaghan and the bill I owe her to the heroine of the work I am about to bring out; and was at the moment, having come to the *denouement* of the story, debating with myself in what way it would be best to dispose of her. Suddenly the recollection flashed on my mind, that the current of popular taste, in reference to works of fiction, has of late run in the direction of the horrible; and at once resolving, from considera-

tions connected with the sale of the book, to murder my heroine, I instantly made up my mind that the most summary and most *telling* way of perpetrating the deed, would be discharging a pistol at her head. Contemporaneously with this determination was the exclamation, ‘Oh, I’ll blow her brains out at once!’—a determination which Mrs. O’Callaghan, unhappily for herself and me, seems to have supposed referred to her. (Loud laughter, in which the magistrate heartily joined.) Hearing on the stairs loud cries of ‘Murder! murder!’ the moment I had audibly announced to myself the mode in which I meant to dispose of my heroine, and never dreaming that I was, in the remotest manner, connected with those alarming exclamations, I sprang to the door, and tore it open without waiting to unlock it. Not seeing any one on the stairs, I hesitated for a moment as to what I should do; but, thinking the parties might have rushed out to the street, I bounded down-stairs, in order that, if needful,

I might assist in apprehending any ruffian that might have been making an attempt on their lives. Judge, your worship, of my surprise when, on reaching the street, the very first incident which occurred was that of being myself apprehended, and hearing Mrs. O'Callaghan, while pointing to me, vociferating with a desperate emphasis—‘That’s the man ! that’s the murtherer !’ ”

The magistrate and all present again laughed immoderately at the ludicrous affair.

“ I suppose, Mrs. O'Callaghan,” said the magistrate, “ that you are now satisfied that all your alarm was groundless, and that the whole affair is a mistake.”

“ And sure I’m nothin’ of the kind, yer honour,” replied Mrs. O'Callaghan, astonished at the remark of his worship. “ He’s only been tryin’ to desave yer honour by inventions of his own. Oh, yer worship, it’s himself’s the mouth of a ——. I’m afraid to say the word, yer honour, lest I should offend you. As sure as

my name's Judy O'Callaghan, a poor, honest, widow woman, he wanted to murther me intirely."

The magistrate was at great pains to convince her that she was mistaken, but all his efforts were unsuccessful. At length, turning to Joseph, his worship said—"Perhaps you'll pay Mrs. O'Callaghan the small sum you owe her, and leave her lodgings at once—as, owing to the mistaken notion to which she unfortunately still clings, there could be no satisfaction to either party in any longer continuing your present connexion of landlady and lodger."

"I will, sir, certainly," replied Joseph; "I won't return to her house, and I'll call to-morrow, to pay her her bill and take away my trunk."

"Come to me to-morrow!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Callaghan, in an agony of alarm, her whole frame shaking as she spoke. "Come to me! Och, yer honour, don't late him iver show his

murtherous countenance in my house agin. I'd rather lose all the rint he owes me."

"Perhaps, then, you'll *send* the amount," suggested the magistrate, addressing himself to Joseph.

"Oh, certainly, with the greatest pleasure," replied the latter.

The parties then left the Court, Mrs. O'Callaghan soliciting the protection of a policeman for fear of Joseph, on her way home, and the magistrate smilingly acceding to her wishes.

CHAPTER XI.

Joseph loses one of his engagements—A loan transaction with a money-lender—Singular stratagem—Extraordinary adventure.

THE effect of the exposure of Joseph's affairs, as recorded in the preceding chapter, in conjunction with a feeling of dissatisfaction with him which had, on various accounts, existed in the mind of the proprietor of the weekly journal with which he had been some time connected—was the loss of his engagement. With, therefore, an accumulation of pecuniary obligations, arising from the expenses of law proceedings against him, and a diminished income, it will surprise no one to be informed that his affairs were becoming more and more desperate every day. In the extremity of the pecuniary

pressure to which he was at last subjected, he bethought himself of endeavouring to procure the loan of £40 or £50, which would afford him some temporary relief. He mentioned the circumstance to a Mr. O'Brien, a clever, eccentric Irishman, connected with the press, with whom he was very intimate. The latter not only felt, but expressed, the deepest sympathy with Joseph in his unpleasant situation. Nor did he confine his sympathy to mere words. He intimated his willingness to do what he could in assisting Joseph to procure a temporary loan. He added, that he himself would be very much inconvenienced at the moment, if he could obtain the use of a ten-pound note. Mr. O'Brien, after some farther conversation, mentioned that he was acquainted with a Mr. Snatchem, an old miserly man, in the habit of lending money, when he got a high rate of interest for the accommodation; and that he thought that, by their both putting their names to a bill for the amount, they might get a three months' loan of

£50 or £60, at twenty per cent. interest. Joseph was in ecstasies. “Oh, never mind the rate of interest,” he exclaimed; “we’ll give any interest he likes to ask. How soon do you think it can be got?”

“Oh, I should think immediately,” replied Mr. O’Brien.

“To-day?” asked Joseph.

“No, not to-day; not so soon as that. I may not be able to see him to-day.”

“To-morrow, then?” pursued Joseph.

“Well, I should think to-morrow.”

“Where or when shall I see you to-morrow?”

“At my lodgings at ten o’clock. I’ll endeavour to see Snatchem to-night, and, if I can get on the weak side of the old man, we shall have the money by eleven.”

None but those who have felt that their all depended on their obtaining a temporary pecuniary accommodation, can have any conception of the intensity of the anxiety which Joseph

felt throughout the night. He was alternately tossed between hope and fear, expectation and apprehension; a state of mind which is one of the most painful in which a human being can be placed. Sleep visited not his eyes for even one little moment. He spent the night in wishing for the arrival of the morning, in order that he might know his doom.

Morning came at the usual time, and, for once in his life, Joseph proved himself an early riser. He got up at six, paced his room to and fro for an hour afterwards; then went out for a walk to while away the intervening time; returned, hastily shaved, and hurried away to Mr. O'Brien's lodgings.

"Ah! Jenkins, my boy; good luck to both of us!" said Mr. O'Brien, extending his hand to Joseph, as the latter entered his apartment.

"Are we to get it?" inquired Joseph, eagerly.

"All right, old boy! Sixty pounds, and no mistake," was the other's answer.

"My dear fellow," exclaimed Joseph, grasp-

ing Mr. O'Brien by the hand, "I'll never forget this favour—never, as long as there's breath in my body."

"Oh, don't mention it," returned the other. "Now for the stamp. Let me see," continued Mr. O'Brien, fumbling in his pocket, "whether I've got as much money as will procure the stamp. By the powers, I've not! I've only just got half-a-crown and three ha'penny'-orths of coppers, and it requires four and sixpence. Jenkins, have you got the balance?"

Joseph instituted a most rigid search in the locality where he was in the habit of keeping his money, when he happened to have any, which was remarkably seldom of late; but nothing beyond a solitary shilling could he find.

"We must make up the remainder somehow or other," said Mr. O'Brien. "Oh, I'll try my landlady," added he, after a moment's reflection.

"Mrs. Connaught!" cried Mr. O'Brien, putting his head down the stairs.

“Was it meself you were calling, Mr. O’Brien?” responded a voice from the parlour at the foot of the stairs.

“Yes, sure and it is,” returned Mr. O’Brien.

“And what is it ye want?”

“Have you got any money?”

“Och, an’ iv it’s money ye’re wanting, there’s precious little chance of yer getting it.”

“I only want a trifle, and even that but for an hour or two.”

“Then can’t you be afther sayin’ at once how much ye want?”

“Only tenpence halfpenny, Mrs. Connaught.”

“Well, and throth you won’t get it all here, that’s sartain,” replied Mrs. Connaught, rummaging among some coppers she had in a dingy and dusty cupboard. “I’ve just got tenpence, and not a farthing more,” she added, after carefully counting her riches; “and that’s all in coppers.”

“It matters not,” returned Mr. O’Brien,

“ what it’s in if there were enough of it ; but we still want a halfpenny.”

Joseph instituted a second investigation into the state of his pockets, and happily found the needful halfpenny, and an odd one to the bargain.

The stamp was forthwith procured ; the bill drawn up, and both names adhibited to it. Mr. O’Brien hurried away to a small miserable room in the neighbourhood of his lodgings, occupied by Mr. Snatchem, and dignified by the latter gentleman with the name of an office. The bill was discounted, and Mr. O’Brien returned in less than twenty minutes with the money, bating the deduction of twenty per cent., amounting to three pounds, agreed on in consideration of the accommodation. Joseph’s eye lighted up, and his countenance became flushed with joy, when the money was laid on the table before him. He could scarcely credit the evidence of his vision, when he saw so large a sum under his control ; for it was before, as has

been already hinted, understood by both, that the matter of ten pounds would suffice to meet the more urgent claims against Mr. O'Brien. If anything could have increased Joseph's joy, it would have been the circumstance of Mr. O'Brien's saying, with a noble disinterestedness of mind, which, though not unmingled with many foibles and defects, always characterized him—"Jenkins, my dear fellow, I dare say you're a little harder up just now than I am; and very possibly besides, having had longer experience in the line than you, I'm perhaps a little more successful in staving off those clamorous cormorants called creditors, than you are. Therefore I'll do with the odd seven pounds, and you can have the entire fifty for yourself."

Joseph readily conceded the claims of his friend to greater experience in the gentlemanly profession of getting into debt without any thought as to whether or not there would be any probability of ever getting out again.

Equally ready was he to admit, that Mr. O'Brien was much more successful in parrying off the importunities of impatient creditors. Nor, as will be very easily believed, did he at all demur to the orthodoxy of the conclusion which his friend deduced from the premises—namely, that he should content himself with the odd pounds, and let Joseph have the round fifty.

Our hero immediately commenced the work of paying, in some instances partly, in others wholly, the more clamorous of his creditors. For a short season afterwards he enjoyed a comparative respite from their persecutions—the luxury of which respite those only can have a proper idea of, who have been, like Joseph, worried not only out of temper, but almost out of life, by their solicitations and menaces.

Three months are not a long period; and on the eve of the expiration of that time, Joseph was apprised by a polite note from Mr. Snatchem, that the bill of sixty pounds, drawn in the joint names of himself and Mr. O'Brien,

fell due on a particular day. What was to be done? Not a sixpence had either put aside with a view to meet the bill; nor did they see the most slender probability of being able, by any exertions they could make, to take it up. Joseph now felt himself to be in a worse condition than ever. This was the largest sum for which he had ever rendered himself liable to be summarily sued: his other debts, though numerous, were principally in small sums, and were owing to tradesmen; not to professed money-lenders, who, of all other classes, are the most unfeeling, and the most vindictive in their proceedings against those who fall into their clutches.

Mr. O'Brien, seeing the deep depression of spirits—a depression verging on absolute despondency—into which Joseph had plunged himself, because of the inability of either to meet the bill—entreated him not to resign himself to despair. “If,” answered Joseph, “we had only a fortnight’s indulgence, I am

certain of a sum of money from a publisher for literary labour done, which would more than suffice to take up the bill."

And this, it may be here right to remark, was strictly true. Joseph had written a compilation on an historical subject, for which he was to receive sixty pounds; and had an article in the current number of a periodical belonging to the same publisher, which came to seven pounds odd; while he had just corrected the proof of another contribution to the forthcoming number of the same periodical, which would bring him from six to seven pounds. Magazine-day would occur in the middle of the following week, and he had received a note from the bibliopole, requesting him to call to receive his money for the whole in four or five days afterwards, should [a cheque not be sent him before then.

"A fortnight's indulgence, did you say?" remarked Mr. O'Brien.

"That would be all. Indeed I should not

require quite so much," answered Joseph. And he proceeded to state, as we have just done, the source whence the needful sum would be received.

"Leave it to me," said Mr. O'Brien, "and I'll procure the indulgence."

"Do you think you can?" asked Joseph, eagerly.

"I'm sure of it."

Joseph was raised in a moment to the third heaven of happiness.

It is proper here to remark that, though Joseph and Mr. Snatchem were quite unknown to each other previously to the discounting of the bill, they had, since then, become slightly acquainted—that is to say, to the extent of exchanging a "How d'ye do?" with each other, when they chanced to meet in the streets.

The day on which the bill fell due, arrived; and Mr. O'Brien, who thoroughly understood the character and habits of Mr. Snatchem, made perfectly sure, in his own mind, that the money-

lender, finding the bill had not been taken up, would call at his lodgings in ten or fifteen minutes past five o'clock. He accordingly prepared for the reception of Mr. Snatchem. He gave instructions to his landlady, if a Mr. Snatchem called in the course of the evening, to send him up-stairs, but on no account to say to any other person who might inquire for him, that he was at home. Mrs. Connaught promised obedience to Mr. O'Brien's orders, and with her promise he was satisfied; for he had always found her worthy of all confidence in such matters. Having thus arranged with his landlady, Mr. O'Brien immediately set to work to carry into effect the idea he had formed. He put the blankets into a shape as nearly resembling the form of a human being, as it was possible to make them. He then threw a sheet over the figure, if so it might be called, thus formed, and so arranged the curtains of the bed as that enough of it should be seen to leave the impression that a human body was lying in it.

This part of his plan being executed to his satisfaction, he next drew down the window curtains. Five o'clock struck; and he seated himself in an easy chair, and commenced attentively listening for a double knock at the street door. In about ten minutes an energetic knock was heard. "Now, then, for acting my part," ejaculated Mr. O'Brien to himself. He snatched up a pocket handkerchief, which he had previously sprinkled, to the proper extent, with water. He also applied to his eyes a particular composition, which has the effect of instantaneously giving the eye a red and watery appearance. Mr. Snatchem knocked at the door of his room. "Come in," said Mr. O'Brien, in a subdued and sorrowful tone of voice. "How do you?" said Mr. Snatchem, drily, and coldly extending his hand, as he entered the apartment.

"How are you, Mr. Snatchem?" responded the other, in a way which rather resembled sighing than speaking—at the same time slowly

and softly putting out his hand to receive the proffered hand of the money-lender.

“ Sit down, Mr. Snatchem.”

Mr. Snatchem sat down, and Mr. O'Brien buried his face in his handkerchief.

“ I'm quite surprised that neither you nor Mr. Jenkins have taken up this bill,” said the moneyed man, in reproachful accents, after a momentary pause.

“ Oh ! my dear sir, I beg you won't speak of money matters to me just now,” sobbed Mr. O'Brien, partially raising his face, and revealing his eyes full of moisture, and having all the other appearances of being in the act of giving expression to the deepest sorrow.

“ What's the matter ? What's the matter, Mr. O'Brien ?” inquired Mr. Snatchem, in a subdued and even half-sympathetic tone.

“ Oh, my dear sir, don't ask me what's the matter, when you see that bed before you,” replied Mr. O'Brien, sobbing audibly as he spoke, and burying his face still deeper in his

handkerchief, after he had given utterance to the words.

Mr. Snatchem looked towards the bed.

“What, Mr. O’Brien, some friend dead?”

“Ay, and the dearest friend I had on earth.”

“Bless me; I’m truly sorry to hear it,” said the other. “Any relation?”

“No relation; but one much dearer to me than any relation I ever had,” groaned Mr. O’Brien.

“Dear me! Do I know your departed friend?”

“You do. Poor Joseph Jenkins!”

And again Mr. O’Brien gave vent to his grief in a succession of sobs, which seemed to have been fetched up from the lowest depths of his heart.

“Bless my soul! And is Mr. Jenkins dead?” said Mr. Snatchem, in tones expressive of great concern.

“Don’t ask me the question. Don’t mention his name; you only harrow up my feel-

ings. Look in that bed; a better fellow never breathed."

"When did the melancholy event occur?"

"Last night, about nine o'clock. It was quite a sudden event—the work of a moment—a fit of apoplexy."

"God bless us! So sudden as that!"

"Awfully sudden," groaned Mr. O'Brien.

"Then I cannot, under such affecting circumstances, say anything, at present, about the bill, I suppose."

"Oh! Mr. Snatchem," replied Mr. O'Brien, raising his head, and speaking in clearer tones, because uttering the language of rebuke; "oh! Mr. Snatchem, I'm quite surprised you could have the heart to allude to such a subject just now."

"These are matters, Mr. O'Brien, that must, you know, be attended to."

"It's quite useless to speak to me about such matters now. My mind is too much occupied about the death of my friend."

“ Well, then,” said Mr. Snatchem, “ I must wait till the funeral is over, I suppose.”

“ You must, indeed.”

“ When does the funeral take place ? ”

“ The day is not yet fixed. Certainly not before eight days.”

“ Well, then, I suppose I may rely on your attention to the matter in nine or ten days, at farthest.”

“ I can’t promise quite so soon as that. There will be various little things to attend to for two or three days after the funeral.”

“ What time, then, may I depend on the bill being taken up ? ”

“ Say a fortnight from this day, and it shall be attended to without fail.”

“ Well, I will say a fortnight,” answered Mr. Snatchem. “ Good night, Mr. O’Brien.”

“ Good night, Mr. Snatchem,” replied Mr. O’Brien, holding out his right hand to receive that of Mr. Snatchem, still keeping his face buried in his handkerchief by means of his left hand.

No sooner had Mr. O'Brien heard the outer door shut, as Mr. Snatchem quitted the house, than he began dancing for joy at the success of his scheme. The window curtain was put up, and the bed restored to its wonted state.

Next morning Joseph called to ascertain whether anything, and what, had been done to obtain the fortnight's indulgence from their creditor. "It's all right," was Mr. O'Brien's answer, as Joseph entered his apartment.

"Are you serious?" inquired Joseph, half doubtingly.

"Perfectly so."

"An entire fortnight?"

"An entire fortnight."

"Oh, how fortunate! By what process of reasoning did you prevail on old Snatchem to give us the indulgence?"

"I'll tell you that another time; not at present."

"I should like to know, because I regard it as a signal proof of your powers of persuasion."

“You shall know all when the bill is taken up; not till then. In the meantime it will be good policy for both of us to keep out of Snatchem’s way until the thing is settled, lest the sight of either should chance to recal the matter to his memory, and induce him to revoke the respite he has given us.”

“I shall take care,” replied Joseph, “that he does not see my face until the money is in his pocket. I shall make a point of going to the country early every morning, and not returning till late in the evening, in order that there may be no chance of his seeing me.”

“Do,” said Mr. O’Brien. “I shall do the same. That’s the best way to prevent his seeing you. Were we to move about in town in the usual way, there is no saying when or where he might meet with us.”

Joseph kept his word; one day he spent at Chatham, another at Gravesend, another at Watford, and so on. The last day but one he spent at Windsor: the season was the close of

autumn. After spending the day in rambling about that interesting place, he returned to one of the secondary inns in order to have some refreshment previously to taking his place in the coach, which started for town at eight o'clock. It was now about seven, and the sun had just concluded his circuit for the day; but still it was not sufficiently dark to require the introduction of candles. Joseph walked, as was his wont, with slow and stately step, into the public room. Instantly a loud scream proceeded from a person who was sitting at the table. Joseph was too much confounded to be able to utter a word. What could be the meaning of this? The waiter was in the act of rushing into the room to see what was the matter, and the stranger was in the act of rushing out, in a state of the most terrible alarm. The result was, that both rushed into each other's arms with a force which made them severally stagger.

“A ghost—a ghost!” gasped the terrified stranger.

“A what?” cried the waiter.

“The ghost of Mr. Jenkins,” groaned the other, half suffocated from fright.

The reader is left to form the best idea he can of the amazement of poor Joseph. He was so entirely under the dominion of astonishment at what he saw and heard, as to be unable to give utterance to a single word. There he stood as motionless as a statue, and as silent as the grave; circumstances which were not without their effect in proselytizing “William” to the theory of Joseph’s ghostship, so potently believed in by the stranger.

“Oh! waiter,” gasped the stranger, after a momentary surprise; “oh! waiter, take me out of this room.”

And, as he spoke, he clung with more desperate tenacity than ever to the astonished William.

“Would you step into the private room, sir?” inquired the waiter, supporting the stranger by the arm.

“Anywhere, anywhere, to be out of this room.”

William bore the half-lifeless stranger into the private room, in which mine host and hostess were at tea.

“Is the gentleman ill?” inquired Boniface, as he saw the stranger carried in by the waiter.

“William, William,” cried the landlady, without waiting for an answer to her husband’s question, “send for a doctor directly.”

“It’s not a doctor, ma’am, that the gentleman wants,” said the waiter.

“What then’s the matter?” inquired the landlord.

“He’s frightened, sir,” replied William.

“Yes, and no wonder,” gasped the stranger.

“What could have frightened him in the public room?”

“He says a ghost, sir.”

“Ay, a ghost,” groaned the stranger.

“Mercy on us!” shrieked the landlady.

At this moment Joseph, having partially

recovered from his confusion, and anxious to receive some explanation of the extraordinary circumstance, walked with the same staid and stately manner as before, into the apartment where the stranger, the waiter, the landlord and lady, were all congregated.

“There he is—there’s the ghost again!” screamed the stranger, as Joseph presented himself.

The landlady shrieked with such tremendous energy, as to bring the whole establishment of servants around her in a moment.

Boniface, who was a man of considerable nerve, and not a very likely person to embrace any supernatural theory, unless on the most convincing evidence, directed a searching gaze to the countenance of Joseph, and then declared his conviction that he was no ghost.

“You’re quite right, sir,” said Joseph, who had by this time considerably recovered his composure.

The waiter having heard Joseph thus speak,

and seeing him look like a being of flesh and blood, at length ventured to express his concurrence in the conclusion to which his master had come.

“You’re mistaken,” gasped the stranger; “it is a ghost. I saw him dead, and lying in his grave-clothes, with my own eyes.”

“Saw me dead and in my grave-clothes?” said Joseph, amazed and half horrified at the thought. “Why, the man must be mad.”

“I think so too,” said the landlord. “I wish his friends were here to take care of him.”

“I wish they were,” echoed the waiter. “I wish *we* were rid of him.”

“Do you know the gentleman’s name, William?” said Boniface, addressing himself to the waiter.

“He calls himself Mr. Snatchem, sir.”

“Calls himself what?” exclaimed Joseph; who, in the confusion of the moment, and his altered appearance consequent on the fright, did not before recognise Mr. Snatchem in the

stranger ; “ calls himself what ? Surely it can’t be Mr. Snatchem. Mr. Snatchem,” continued Joseph, advancing a few paces to where the other was, and extending his hand to him, “ what’s the meaning of all this ? ”

Mr. Snatchem shrunk back, shuddering at the idea of contact with a spirit.

“ What ! Mr. Snatchem, don’t you know me ? ”

Mr. Snatchem made no reply.

“ Don’t you know Mr. Jenkins ? ”

“ Mr. Jenkins is dead, and in his grave,” replied Mr. Snatchem, in feeble and faltering accents.

“ Poor man ! his intellects are deranged, or he has been seized with some unaccountable temporary delusion,” remarked Joseph.

“ But what’s to be done with him ? ” said the landlord.

“ Hadn’t we better commit him to the care of the authorities ? ” suggested the waiter.

At this moment the sound of the horn announced that the coach was on the eve of

starting to London, and Joseph being under the necessity of being in the office of the paper with which he was connected that night by eleven o'clock, said he was obliged to go; and quitted the house, begging Boniface to see that every care was taken of Mr. Snatchem.

Joseph had not been many minutes gone, before Mr. Snatchem began to recover from his fright, and to regain his wonted composure of mind. In a few hours he was so far recovered as to be able to return to town by the mail, which passed through Windsor in the course of the night.

Next morning Joseph hurried to Mr. O'Brien's lodgings, to relate to him the extraordinary adventure he had had with Mr. Snatchem. Mr. O'Brien was so convulsed with laughter at the romantic relation as to be unable, for some time, to utter a word. When his paroxysm of laughter had so far passed away as to admit of his conversing with Joseph, he acquainted him with the hoax he had played on "Old

Snatchem," when he came to intimate his determination to take peremptory proceedings against both for the non-payment of the bill. "Of course," he added, "when Snatchem knows the trick which has been played at his expense, he'll show us no mercy."

"Oh, we don't require it now," said Joseph; "when I returned last night, I found a cheque from Mr. Crompton, for £65, the sum he owed me. Here it is," said Joseph, handing Mr. O'Brien the cheque.

"Heaven be praised for that," said the latter. "Let us cash it, and take up the bill immediately."

"It may be done in five minutes. It is payable at Coutts' bank, which is not a minute's walk from this," remarked Joseph.

The cheque was forthwith cashed, and Mr. O'Brien sent the money with a friend to Mr. Snatchem, apologising to him for the hoax which had been played off at his expense; and urging as the reason why it had been practised, that

neither himself nor Mr. Jenkins could advance a single sixpence to meet the bill when it became due, and that he (Mr. O'Brien) knew of no other means by which they could induce him (Mr. Snatchem) to grant them the requisite indulgence.

CHAPTER XII.

Joseph visits Mr. Lovegood—Conversation with Mr. Lovegood—Conversation between the latter and his daughter—Mr. Lovegood's death and character.

SEVERAL months had elapsed during which Joseph and Mr. Lovegood had not met; and the former, one morning, having begun to reproach himself for allowing so long an interval to pass, without calling on one to whom he felt so deeply indebted, of whose friendship he continued to feel a growing sense, and for whose general character, though not sharing in his views as regarded the practical parts of religion, he felt an increasing admiration—determined to atone for his past omission, by calling more frequently in future on Mr. Lovegood. Joseph also made up his mind to call that

morning on him. On arriving at his residence, and knocking at the door, he was informed by the housemaid, that Mr. Lovegood had been for some days complaining of illness; but that if he would give his name—for, being a new servant, she knew nothing of Joseph—she would mention who was inquiring for him. Joseph handed his card to the maid, who immediately went upstairs with it. She returned in a few seconds, and said that Mr. Lovegood wished particularly to see him. Joseph accordingly proceeded to Mr. Lovegood's bedroom, and was pained at finding he was confined to his bed. Mr. Lovegood expressed the greatest gratification at seeing Joseph again, and intimated his regret that he should be such a stranger. After a few words of general conversation, Joseph renewed the expression of deep concern which he had made on first shaking hands with Mr. Lovegood, at finding him so ill. The latter remarked, that sickness was incident to humanity; and that, consequently, nothing had happened in his case

for which he and all men ought not to be always prepared.

Joseph assented to the justice of the remark, without feeling much of its force; and then expressed a hope that his friend would soon recover.

“ My recovery is very doubtful,” remarked Mr. Lovegood. “ At any rate, it is the part of wisdom in me not to be too sanguine in my expectations of restoration to health. It ought to be, and I trust it is, enough for me to know, that I am in the best of hands. I ought not in this, any more than in the ordinary dispensations of Providence, to have any will of my own; but should have my own will entirely absorbed in the will of Him who knows what is best.”

“ But life is sweet; and it is human nature to cling to it as long as we can,” suggested Joseph.

“ Very true,” remarked Mr. Lovegood; “ and religion does not tell us to be reckless of or to

disregard life. On the contrary, it teaches us that to rush recklessly into peril, is a moral crime of no ordinary magnitude; but, on the other hand, we are not, however great may be our attachment to life, to refuse to resign it into His hands who gave it, when he is pleased to recal the gift."

Joseph made no reply. After a moment's pause, Mr. Lovegood resumed—"You know, Mr. Jenkins, that you and I have had several conversations on religious topics; and when I say that I now feel religion to be the one thing needful, you will bear me testimony, that I do not say it for the first time. What I say now, when probably on the brink of the grave and the verge of the eternal world, I said in the prime of life, and when the fountain of health was full to overflowing. Had you only, my dear friend, listened, when first we met, to my counsels in reference to religious matters, you would have lived a much happier life, and insured for yourself perfect peace, when you

shall be, as I am now, stretched on a bed of sickness, with a strong impression that death will be the issue. I am now more than ever convinced, that as religion alone can soothe and sanctify the spirit in life, so it is the only thing which can afford support and administer consolation to the soul in the immediate prospect of death."

Mr. Lovegood evidently intended to have proceeded; but, just as he had finished the latter sentence, his medical man entered, and Joseph, unperceived by Mr. Lovegood, stole out of the room and quitted the house,—more concerned about the illness of his friend, than impressed by the affectionate admonition he was in the act of addressing to him.

Joseph called again on the following day, to inquire how Mr. Lovegood was. He was then much worse; so much so, as to be strictly prohibited by his medical adviser, from seeing any one but the members of his own family, and even them as little and as seldom as possible.

One member of his family, however, his daughter Mary, a young girl of about twenty years of age, he insisted, contrary to the wishes of his physician and his wife, on seeing. Mary was a handsome and beautiful young girl; amiable, too, in mind, and accomplished in manners; but she never exhibited the slightest trace of any truly religious feeling. When, therefore, Mr. Lovegood was earnestly entreated by his wife to act in accordance with the instructions of the doctor, and not fatigue himself by conversation, his answer was, "In what way could a Christian parent, who feels his end to be at hand, more properly spend his last hours on earth, than in seeking the everlasting well-being of his child?" He accordingly requested Mary to come and sit down by his bedside, without the presence of any other member of the family. His wishes were complied with. Mary approached his bedside, the tears streaming from her eyes, and her heart almost broken at the thought, that she might be on the eve of

losing so affectionate, so indulgent, so worthy a father.

“Mary,” said the dying man—for we may so far anticipate the event, as to say he was in a dying state—“Mary, my dear,” said Mr. Lovegood, taking his daughter gently by the hand, “sit down on the side of the bed.”

Mary sat down on her father's bedside.

“You see your father is very ill, my dear.”

Mary gave vent to her feelings in a fresh flood of tears.

“You know how earnestly and affectionately I have sought, ever since you reached the years of reflection, to awaken your mind to a sense of the importance of divine things, and of the necessity of personal religion.”

The good man here paused for a moment, as if waiting to see whether his daughter would make any reply. She made none. Then Mr. Lovegood resumed—“And times without number, as is well known to Him in whose presence I am, in all probability, soon to be, have I,

when no human eye saw me nor human ear heard me, supplicated the throne of grace on your behalf. My prayers have not as yet been heard in heaven; or rather, I should say, have not been visibly answered on earth. You have been an affectionate child, a dutiful daughter; you have been what the world calls a virtuous person. But mere affection and duty to me; the mere habitual performance of those actions which the world calls virtuous, will never, however praiseworthy in themselves, bring a single human being to heaven. Unless you are deeply sensible of your guilt in the eye of Him who made you; unless you are humbled on account of that guilt, and fall, prostrate in spirit, before the cross of that Saviour who died to redeem a ruined world, you can have no scriptural ground to expect a happy hereafter. It is because, my dear Mary, I love you with an intensity of affection beyond the power of expression, that I thus speak. This may be my farewell address to you: you may never

again hear my voice on earth. You may be looking on your father for the last time in this world—the last time, I mean, in which his eye can respond to your look of sorrowful affection.”

Here Miss Lovegood gave vent to her uncontrollable grief in an audible burst of feeling. She felt as if her heart would literally break. None but those who have been present at the bedside of a dying father, whose affection knew no limits, whose solicitude for his offspring was strong and constant, and whose conduct was exemplary, in the highest degree, in all the relations of life; none but such can form any idea of the intense and almost overwhelming anguish of Mary's mind at this moment.

After a temporary pause Mr. Lovegood resumed—“My dear child, there is nothing which pains or disturbs me in the prospect of the momentous event which I believe to be before me, and the solemn scene which invariably and immediately follows that event, but the concern

I feel for your condition. Who knows but my illness and its issue, seeing that the ordinary means of grace and the ordinary dispensations of Providence have failed to have that effect, may have been specially appointed for your conversion? If so, painful as the bereavement must be to your natural feelings, my death will be to you the greatest mercy you could have received—a mercy, it is true, in disguise, but still a mercy of the greatest magnitude.”

Here the good man's feelings quite overcame him. For a little season he was unable to proceed; but, though no words escaped his lips, there was a language in his looks, an expression in the increased and tender pressure of his hand, which spoke with terrible power to Mary's heart.

“Mary, my dear, I feel myself getting weaker and weaker,” resumed the dying man. “It is with very great difficulty I can now speak at all. I feel ——”

“Would it not be better, my dear father?”

interrupted Mary, in tender but scarcely articulate accents, now, for the first time, attempting to utter a word; "would it not be better for you, my dear father, to take a little rest, as you are so exhausted?"

"It is, my dear girl, because I feel so much for you, that I endeavour to speak. Of the rest of the family I have the most confident hopes. Did I but see a saving change in you, I could close my eyes in death without a pang, save that which nature feels at being severed for ever from those who are dear to me as my own soul. If my last breath be now passing away, in what better way could it be spent than in seeking your everlasting welfare?"

Here Mr. Lovegood breathed more rapidly, and with greater difficulty. "I fear," he continued, after a few moments' pause, "I fear that I shall be able to speak but a few more words to you. Let these few words be spent, my dear child, in prayer for you. Will you kneel down by my bedside?"

Mary knelt down beside the bed of her dying father, and the good man poured forth his soul in fervent prayer, that his death, should death be the issue, might prove the spiritual life of his dear daughter. His prayer was so remarkable for its unction, that it seemed as if it had come from a pure spirit in heaven, instead of from a being on earth. It is impossible to describe the emotions of Mary's mind at this moment. She felt a power accompanying the prayer of her expiring parent, which she had never experienced before. She felt her heart softened, her spirit subdued, her soul humbled in the very dust, as the dying man, who seemed as if endowed, for the moment, with a supernatural strength, besieged the throne of mercy on her behalf. Whether Mr. Lovegood would have attempted to resume his parting counsels to his daughter, or, having committed her in fervent prayer to Him before whom he felt he was on the eve of appearing, we cannot say—the physician having entered the room just as he

had emphatically uttered the "Amen" to his supplications.

Seeing Mr. Lovegood so exhausted, and hoping that, though there was no probability of his recovering, a little medicine which would have the effect of procuring sleep, might enable him to hold on a little longer, the physician administered a small dose of laudanum. A few minutes after Mr. Lovegood had taken the prescription, he fell into a profound slumber, out of which he did not awaken till the following morning.

Mr. Lovegood's wife was sitting by his bedside when he awakened from his long sleep. After a few words of conversation with her, he expressed a wish to see Mary again, mentioning that the circumstance of never having seen her, notwithstanding all her amiable and morally excellent qualities, exhibit the slightest symptom of that spiritual transformation of character, without which there can be no real happiness in this life, nor felicity in the world to come,

pressed very heavily on his mind. Mrs. Lovegood told him that, since his last interview with Mary, she had been under the deepest concern about divine things; and that, after a night of great anxiety, mingled with much alarm, respecting her condition in the sight of her Creator, she had, about two hours previous to the moment at which she (Mrs. Lovegood) was speaking, suddenly found, to use her own words, "peace and joy in believing;" and that, without appearing in an ecstatic state of mind, she was now, as she herself expressed it, in a new world, experiencing a happiness she never before enjoyed, and of which she had no previous conception.

The dying man clasped his hands, raised his eyes to heaven, and said, with a solemn emphasis, which she who alone heard it can never forget, "Thank God for that; to His name be all the praise."

After a short pause, he expressed a wish to see such of his family as were in the house.

His wish was complied with: in less than a minute all the members of his family were standing by his bedside. He eagerly gazed on them, looking as if he felt it would be the last time he should ever be permitted to see them in time; and then said—"My dear wife and children, I am now about to be taken from you. My hour, I feel, is come. The last grain in my sand-glass is in the act of running its brief journey. I am here just now: many minutes may not elapse before I shall be in the world of spirits. My parting admonition to each and all of you is, not to seek for your happiness in the things of time; not to seek it in the world's honours, riches, or pleasures. Seek it above: choose Him who is the Great Author of all, as your portion for time and eternity. I have earnestly and unceasingly, in life, sought to impress on you the infinite importance of divine things. With my dying breath, and with the great white throne present to my view, would I repeat my admoni-

tions. If I found the doctrines and promises of the Gospel to be my solace and support in life, I find them doubly valuable in this the hour of my death. Without them, what should I be at this moment? With them, death has no terrors to me. I am as calm and peaceful in spirit, as if I were already in those celestial regions where the spirits of just men made perfect, and holy angels, are completely and everlastingly blessed."

Here Mr. Lovegood paused, not as if he had finished what he meant to say, but as if something internal—something not visible to the eye—had prevented his proceeding farther. The cause was soon made apparent. In a few seconds he closed his eyes, heaved a gentle sigh, and, with a countenance as placid and cheerful as that of the innocent babe in the moment of its healthful and happy repose, resigned his spirit into the hands of Him who gave it.

Such was the death of Mr. Lovegood. No one could have witnessed the singularly pleasing,

though solemn circumstances which marked his dying moments, without inwardly wishing, "May I die the death of the righteous, and may my last end be like his."

Of the character of Mr. Lovegood a very imperfect sketch was given, when we introduced him into our pages in the first volume. It is due to the dead, as it is to be hoped it will prove profitable to the living, to furnish a few additional particulars. Mr. Lovegood was a Christian] philanthropist in the most enlarged acceptation of the phrase. He sought invariably to associate together—as to the eye of enlightened reason they ever will be found united—the present good and the eternal well-being of his fellow-creatures. With him it was a fixed principle to do all the good in his power. He lay under the habitual conviction, that man is responsible for his time, and for his opportunities of usefulness; and that, consequently, after conceding to the necessities of nature and the comfortable support of his family, such a por-

tion of his time as they required, he was bound to labour for the good of others. He *did* so labour in various ways—often in ways unknown even to his family; unknown, indeed, to any human being, with the solitary exception of those who were the objects of his solicitude. His was not the benevolence that delights in display; his was not the charity that seeks to be paraded in the public prints, or proclaimed on the house tops. The labours of Mr. Lovegood were principally performed in the privacy of obscure life. He never denied himself to any one that sought his advice or assistance. No frown on his face ever frightened away or repulsed the poor timid applicant for an interview. He met all who sought to see him, with a cheerful countenance, and spoke to them in the accents of friendship. Hence, in hundreds of cases, those whom he was unable to aid, or whose purposes it was not in his power to promote—even they quitted his presence with sentiments of the highest esteem, and ever afterwards derived

gratification from the recollection of the interview.

Such was Mr. Lovegood. The writer could never contemplate his character when alive, nor can he recur to it now that he is gone, without imagining in his own mind, how unexpected and surprising must be the disclosures of that eventful day, when the world's teeming population, from the time of Adam down to the "last man," shall meet in one mighty assemblage to hear the irrevocable decisions of the Judge of all. How many myriads of men shall then burst forth on the astonished multitude, as philanthropists of the purest and loftiest order; men whose benevolence was unwearied, and was only bounded by their means; who passed through life unnoticed and unknown for their deeds of charity and mercy. Their works of benevolence were known only while here, to Him from whom nothing is hid, and to the unhappy creatures to whose necessities they ministered. In another world, their

benevolence will be revealed to all. Let this consoling conviction be ever present to the minds of those who are earnestly and unremittingly labouring, in secret, for the good of their fellow-men. Let it encourage their hearts and cheer their spirits to be assured that, when the darkness of time shall be dispelled by the light of eternity, all their acts of kindness to their fellow-creatures, shall be owned, acknowledged, and applauded, in the presence of an assembled universe.

END OF VOL. II. .







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